

A CHINESE ST. FRANCIS
OR THE LIFE OF BROTHER MAO
BY C. CAMPBELL BROWN :





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A CHINESE ST. FRANCIS



GROUP OF PASTORS AND PREACHERS AT A MEETING OF CHUANCHOW PRESBYTERY

Back row—First on left, Hung Ch'eh; second, Brother Mao; tenth, Ch'en Mei

Second row—Third from left, Rev. G. M. Wales; fifth, Dr. David Grant

Front row—Fifth from left, Rev. Ch'en Hsüan Ling; ninth, Rev. Mr. Wei

The front wall of the South Street Church forms the background

A CHINESE ST. FRANCIS

OR

THE LIFE OF BROTHER MAO

(Cheng Mao)

BY

C. CAMPBELL BROWN

AUTHOR OF

"CHINA IN LEGEND AND STORY," ETC.



ILLUSTRATED

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

TO
ROBERT JOWITT WHITWELL
FRIEND, BROTHER AND FELLOW-LABOURER
IN THE KINGDOM AND PATIENCE
OF JESUS CHRIST

THE city was old and the city said to God,
“Old am I and deaf. The voices that I used to hear
Sound faint and far. Hast Thou no word?”

The city was old and the city said to God,
“The stars are setting and my eyes are dim,
Is it near the dawning?”

The city was old and weary and the city said to God,
“Weary am I of waiting and the people die like flies,
Where art Thou, God?”

Then God took a man and——

PREFACE

THE aim of this volume is to reproduce, however imperfectly, a book which lives in the hearts of men and women to whom the memory of Cheng Mao is sacred; through him they learned to trust the Saviour; with him they hope to see God's face; till then they keep tryst. The collection of its materials has been a means of grace, as well to the writer, as to those who have lived over again supreme moments of the soul, when telling the story of what God's servant was enabled to do for them and for others in bygone days. For this, and for other reasons, the recollections of Cheng Mao's friends have, as far as possible, been preserved in their original form, and woven together, by the help of available documents, so as to let the man of whom they tell reveal his personality through his own words and actions.

The beauty of the life itself and its swift perfecting, bring home to us the timelessness

of that working, to which one day is as a thousand years; whilst its results, proving as they do that the age of miracles is still with us, encourage our hopes for the regeneration of the heathen world.

And our trust is strengthened, as we are again reminded that the one incontrovertible argument for Christianity is a holy life, and see that the growing record of individuals redeemed from heathenism is an apologetic, which rings our ancient faith about as with a wall of fire.

At the same time, the absence of faults, for which this life is remarkable, has rendered it somewhat difficult to handle. But, despite the fear lest it should be discredited by the virtues which ought to recommend it, the narrative of Cheng Mao's doings has been put down without reticence or exaggeration. After being verified, wherever that has been practicable, by still existing facts, it has been submitted to the criticism of those who knew him best, and it is hoped that, in spite of defects in the delineation, the result is a fairly reliable account of a good man.

With a sense of loss, and of humble admiration, the transcriber of these pages lays down

his pen and bids farewell to the gracious spirit with whom he has had fellowship for many days.

“Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life.”

The writer's best thanks are due to all who have loved Cheng Mao and told something of his story, also to Dr. and Mrs. Gowdy of Foochow, the Revs. W. Bissonnette, Henry Thompson, John Watson, and G. M. Wales, who have read this book in MS. and furnished much valuable advice; to his wife, whose literary instinct and faithful criticism have been most helpful; and to the Rev. Eneas Mackintosh, for generous aid in preparing it for the press.

CHUANCHOW-FU,
1911.

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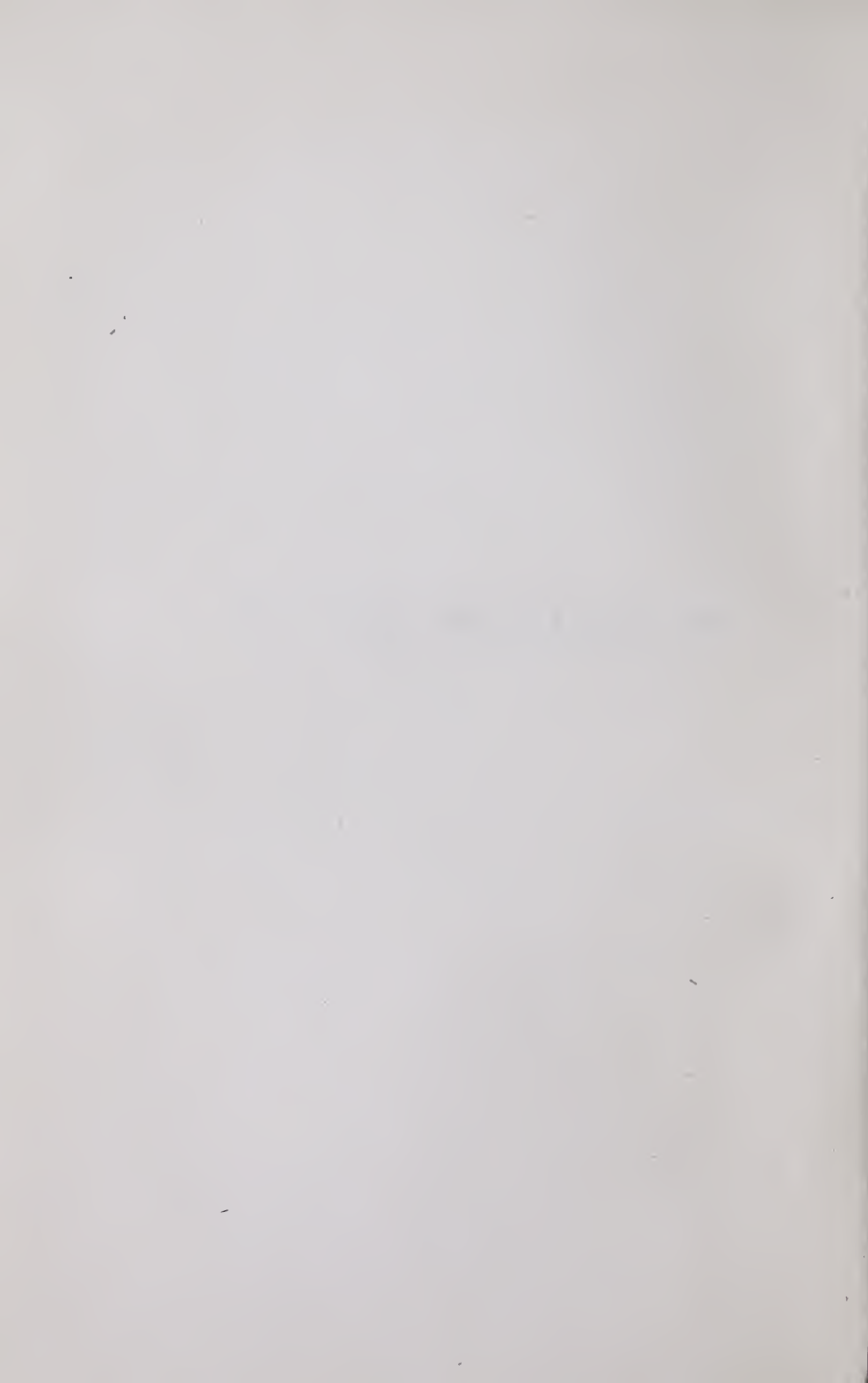
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THE MAKING OF THE MAN



CHAPTER I

THE LITTLE WILD CAT

“The eternal verities personified are standing in the wings : they seem to be prompting the players in every act and word.”—ANON.

NOT far from the Prefect's yamen and a little to the east of the principal granary¹ of Chuan-chow,² there rises a curving mound, covered with coarse grasses and shadowed in one place by an ancient tree. This mound, said to be the remains of the first camp built upon the site of the present city, sinks slowly northwards and eastwards to the level of the adjoining vegetable gardens, where pumpkins, sweet potatoes and giant mustard are grown. To the north of these gardens again there lies some nondescript open ground, near the upper end of which is a half-dried pool of water, known as Lowfield Pond, and an irregular row of houses, in one of which Cheng Mao³ was born in the summer of 1851. The baby was named Yung-yuan by his parents, but cried so continuously that his

¹ Provided for use in time of war or famine.

² Often called Chinchew.

³ Pronounced 'Ba' in the Amoy dialect.

mother called him "Yeh Mao," her little "wild cat." The second part of this strange name stuck to the child, and he came to be known by it in after life.

Behind Mao's home are streets of houses stretching to the city wall, beyond which again rice-fields spread away towards the hills. Above and dominating all—here bastioned by rocks, there heaped upon its gentler slopes with blocks of stone, and shot by the green of scattered vegetation, the precipitous Clear Spring mountain hangs over the city. From the browns and dusky reds of the houses, the eye leaps to that magic background; for the mountain is ever changing. Now, as the light strikes level on its sides, harsh, rampant, threatening, an anguished stair of points and splinters under the open sky; now retiring beneath velvet greys and pearl dissolved in mist; now warm and bacchanal, every cliff and boulder wine-red beneath the setting sun.

Several hundred years before little Mao's birth, the Chengs had migrated from the north of the province to a village outside the South Gate, where they remained until four or five generations later, when they moved into the city. The family, like many others in Chuanchow at that time, was partly literary, partly artisan; the head of it, commonly known as Uncle Chhieh, being a shoemaker, whilst the eldest son and

uncle were scholars, following in the footsteps of the grandfather and great-grandfather.

Let us look round this typical household and try to make ourselves acquainted with the people among whom little Mao was to grow up. First, there is the father, a stern man, choleric in disposition, but so devoted to his forbears that when a daughter was born to him, he gave her away to a friend, saying: "My brother ought to bring up children to reverence our ancestors. I have not yet been able to buy a wife for him, how then can I afford to keep a daughter of my own?"

Then we see the house-mother, a gentle woman, from whom the child seems to have inherited the kindly nature and religious instincts, which marked him in after years. Herself a vegetarian, seeking to win merit by abstaining from animal food, she came of a family which had followed this frugal discipline for two generations. A quiet influence in the home, she did much to counteract the harsh humours of an irritable husband. The little figure in her dress of dark blue cotton, tottering on her tiny bandaged feet, was the principal influence in the life of the child, who watched her busy household tasks, or clutched with eager fingers at the silver ornaments and bright flowers adorning her glossy black hair.

The boy grew up devoted to his mother, and

the first great sorrow of his life fell upon him when she was taken ill, and had to lie for weeks in bed. Unable to bear the thought of losing his beloved mother, the little fellow went to the temple of Kwanyin to pray for a speedy recovery, and in anguish of spirit besought "Her that looketh for ever down upon the sound of prayer" to take many years from his own life and add them to that of the being whom he clung to most on earth. The prayer was heard by that God, whose heart not even the follies of idolatry can close to longing souls, and the much-loved mother was spared to her little son.

Other senior members of the household at Lowfield Pond were the boy's uncle, Cheng Chih-ch'iao, and his wife. A Bachelor of Arts with the added distinction of Senior Licentiate, this uncle is described by those who knew him in later life as a sound scholar, expert in yamen matters and official etiquette, a man of courtly presence, who carried himself with the dignity of the old school.

Mao's elder brother, Pai-ch'ien, in time became a student and qualified thrice for the Bachelor's degree, unfortunately each time in brilliant years, so that he failed to gain a place among the limited number upon whom the honour was conferred.¹ Amiable and not without talent, his life was spoilt by the opium habit, from which

¹ The Civil Service examinations were competitive.

he never wholly freed himself. For this reason he was not received into the Church, though towards the end of his life he professed to believe in Christ, and wrote in a letter to a friend, "Like the publican in the parable, I beat upon my breast, saying: God be merciful to me a sinner."

Six years after Mao's birth a younger brother called Chin-i was added to the family. One of the neighbours nicknamed him Tu, from a resemblance which she thought she saw in him to a round red fish of that name. The child's mother was pleased by the fancy, and thus he received the name by which he was known in later life.

In addition to their "milk names," the baby's brothers had the literary designations Pai-ch'ien and Pai-liong. The elder brother used his as scholars are wont to do, but Mao seldom employed any other than the ordinary designation of his boyhood.

Some time after the youngest boy's advent, another member was welcomed to the household, when the eldest son married and, following immemorial custom, brought his wife to live under the parental roof. These then, in brief, are the people who lived in the narrow-browed house by Lowfield Pond, where Mao passed his early days beneath the rocky walls of the Clear Spring mountain.

CHAPTER II

BOYHOOD

“If one is a man, the mills of heaven and earth grind him to perfection; if not, to destruction.”—Buddhist saying, translated by Prof. H. A. GILES.

WHILE yet a tiny child, Mao went to school. He used to rise at dawn, and having eaten some cold potatoes or dough-nuts, bought as he passed along the street, would trot off to begin the work of the day, which (with a pause at breakfast time) continued until two o'clock, when he carried home the wooden “slate” on which antithetic characters, such as good and bad, light and darkness, heaven and earth, were written. After the midday meal he returned to study, until evening fell and it was time to go home.

The baby scholar's chief holiday lasted for a month, from the middle of the last moon of the old year. The opening of the new year was a gladsome time; he was dressed in bright clothes, and had a handful of cash put in his tiny sporran pocket. Every morning of this delightful all-too-brief season brought a red-

letter day, until the night of the Feast of lanterns came, with the glitter and glory of a thousand lights, and closed the holidays. In addition to this longer rest, festivals and the frequent occasions upon which the teacher was called away by business¹ provided welcome breaks in the drudgery of learning by rote. When out of school, the child played and idled and ran errands in the streets like other children, but from the first he was "old-fashioned," as the Chinese say, in a phrase almost identical with that used by the nurses of our youth.

His father, Uncle Chhieh, kept shop for a time opposite the Temple of the Cassia Flower Altar, near one of the chief centres of Chuan-chow shoedom. In spite of the advantages afforded by its position, however, the shop had to close its shutters during a collapse of trade, caused by a local rebellion, which happened when Mao was eight years old. The stock was sold, but the old man sat behind the empty counters for a time, doing such odd jobs as friends or chance might throw in his way.

The child, whose brief school-days were now over, took his share in the daily labours of the family, his chief duties being to carry his father's meals to the city, and on the return journey to bring home small bundles of fuel, purchased

¹ Such as affairs connected with litigation, arrangement of disputes, writing of deeds and so forth.

from wood-cutters as they passed along the street hawking their mountain produce.

In 1861 Mao's uncle was appointed secretary and family tutor to a magistrate in the south of the province.¹ Uncle Chhieh and his eldest son accompanied him to the distant yamen, whilst the two younger boys were left with their mother in Chuanchow. The magistrate's term of office coming to an end about a year later, the father and son returned, and were nearly captured in the last southern raid of the dreaded Taepings, but reached the city in safety, where presently the old man found employment once more in a shoe shop, kept at the 'Sign of Daily Victory.'

In the meantime, the Secretary delayed his return so long, that the household at Lowfield Pond began to fear that he had fallen into the hands of the rebels, rumours of whose doings came to the city increasingly from the south. These fears proved to be only too well founded, for when on the way homewards he had been captured at Changchow, where he was saved from losing his head by a miracle.

For a time the Taepings compelled him to do secretarial work for one of their chieftains, and it was only when they abandoned the city that he managed to escape along with another scholar, who like himself had been made prisoner

¹ At Changpu city.

by the marauders. At last, after many vicissitudes, he found his way north, and was received by his friends as one returned from the dead.

After the excitement caused by these events had died away, things went quietly enough in the little household. When twelve years old, Mao was apprenticed to a tradesman, with whom he served two years, learning to make shoes and gaining his first serious experience of the then busy artisan life of Chuanchow.

It was a curious half-burrowing existence, in which each individual travelled his own beaten path, between the stuffy workroom and the narrow quarters where he slept. Toil without haste, without rest, filled the long days, deepening into a slow fever of unremitting labour towards the end of the year, when large supplies of shoes had to be completed for export in wooden tubs to the Island of Formosa.

The boy's connexion with his first master came to an end in an unexpected manner. His brother, Pai-Ch'ien, having entered for the Literary Chancellor's Examination, he, as a dutiful younger, wished to act as his attendant during the ordeal. From the Chinese point of view this desire was a reasonable one, but his master was vexed when he broached the matter, and striking him on the head, ordered him out of the shop.

Before long he found fresh employment, but

the business was a poor one, and by his master's permission he was allowed, during spare hours, to do something towards his father's support, by selling peanuts and other eatables upon the street. When thus employed he formed the habit of reading, so useful to him in after life, passing delightful moments over his book whilst waiting for custom beneath some temple door or by the roadside.

Thus the years of apprenticeship passed slowly by, until at length we find him on the verge of manhood, working as a journeyman shoemaker beside his father at the 'Sign of Daily Victory.'

The struggle for existence was a hard one. Poverty brooded over his boyhood, never entirely lifting indeed until the end, when, as a black cloud passes in the High Alps, the shadow was removed, revealing the stainless treasure so long concealed within its bosom.

CHAPTER III

AT THE 'SIGN OF DAILY VICTORY'

" Low in the darkness I wander,
Where is the light ? Is there no light ?
Nothing know I, but I wonder,
Is there no light ? Where is the light ?
Lord, in the vastness I wander,
Where is the way ? Is there no way ?
How may I reach Thee, I wonder,
Is there no way ? Where is the way ? "

Tamil Poet of 1000 years ago.

MAO was now full-grown. His stature, which was below middle size, threw the compact head, with its full projecting brow, into special prominence ; his complexion was dark, and, below his remarkably bright and intelligent eyes, the face narrowed towards the mouth and chin. He spoke quietly, sometimes almost as if with difficulty, and he carried himself more like a literary man than an artisan, although he did not affect the turned-out 'figure eight'¹ steps

¹ The Chinese figure eight is something like an inverted "v." When the literati walk with heels together and toes turned widely out they are said to make figure eight steps.

of the dragging scholar gait. His tastes and disposition fitted him for student life, but for a time at least he was to be trained by a harsher discipline than that of the schools.

Every member of the household was at work. Mao and Tu, like their father, were shoemakers. The boys' uncle kept school at home ; their elder brother also took pupils and earned small fees by writing letters, drawing up documents and other such employment between the examinations.

Mao sat at his bench in a narrow room to the left of a small court, in the workmen's quarters at the 'Sign of Daily Victory.' The front of the shop was unglazed, having open counters fronting the street, over which stood a permanent awning of timber to shelter purchasers from sun and rain. He was a reliable hand, earning about 5d. a day of our money by making cloth uppers, and taking no part in the coarse jesting and horseplay of the rougher workmen, who left him out of their conversations, calling him "Bighead," and upon occasion hiding his tools and materials.

An incident, long remembered by one of the actors, may here be given. It happened that in the midst of some clandestine merrymaking an earthenware teakettle was broken. The foreman, coming in at the moment, roundly blamed Mao for the mishap. The object of this outburst

took the scolding in silence, and when the storm had spent itself continued his work without a word; but one of his comrades, roused by a sense of the injustice done to him, told the foreman that he had reproved the wrong man.

The practice of selling eatables after business hours, by which the lad still helped the family income, was a considerable tax upon his strength. Up and down the city he carried his wares, hurrying along when the unseen pavement, with its unexpected heaps of filth, lay invisible in the darkness, to seek out those parts of the thoroughfare where the smoking lamps of shops still open, attracted a few belated wayfarers. Weary, ill-clad, half-fed, he would reach home at last, only too often to be received with harsh words by his ill-tempered father.

In 1874 the Emperor, who ruled under the style of Tung-che, died. Wearing the hair unshaved is a sign of mourning in China, but the citizens, who for some reason were unusually disloyal at the time, would not go for even twenty-seven days without visiting the barber, and it was said that of all the inhabitants of the city, only Mao and another man observed the hundred days of mourning prescribed for His Majesty. His hair, coarsened by the perpetual use of the razor, hung dishevelled about his neck

and forehead, whilst a stubble of black beard bristled on his chin, until the children said that he looked like an unkempt beggar. People taunted him, shouting "Faithful and devoted subject" in derisive tones as he passed along the streets; or, "Common folk like you have no call to mourn a hundred days for Emperors."

His uncle took him to task. "You are but a working man," said he; "why should you go with head unshaved?"

"'In the mourning for a father and mother, He allowed no difference between the noble and the mean.'¹ The Emperor being the 'father and mother of the people,' his subjects, high and low alike, ought to mourn for him," said Mao, settling the matter by a quotation from the classics.

The blow, so feared in childhood, fell heavily when, in the twenty-seventh year of his age, his mother died; the grief it caused was none the less distressing because it had to be borne through days of close confinement, whilst his hands were busy and his brain only too free to think.

In 1878 the future preacher heard the gospel for the first time in the 'Worship Hall,' which had been opened inside the city a few years before by foreign missionaries. When he left the place, some friends who had accompanied him

¹ *Doctrine of the Mean*, xviii. 3, Legge's translation.

began to criticize the address, to which they had been listening. Mao did not join in the conversation for a time, and then surprised his companions by saying quietly :

"You blame the teaching we have just heard as wrong. I cannot but think that it is right."

This visit brought matter for discussion to the busy tongues of the shoemakers at the shop next day, where the new doctrine was condemned as barbarian heresy, but once more the quiet voice was heard protesting, "It is true." But though defending the teaching which he had heard at church he scarce knew why, Mao as yet understood almost nothing of Christianity.

Working hard and faring more hardly still, the young fellow lived his monotonous life, with but little relaxation save for his beloved reading. Days, dull with unceasing labour, even when the sunlight fell bright on court and wall, slipped by one after another, and the words which he had heard at the 'Worship Hall' passed from his mind.

A few months later, Mao's interest was once more awakened when he heard that one or two of the shoemakers in the city had become Christians. Thorough-going Confucianist as he was, he cherished a half-hope that some help—some benefit he knew not what—might be derived from the worship of God. The dis-

covery that an acquaintance named Ch'i "ate the barbarian sect"¹ interested him still further.

One evening not long after, at the corner of Zinc Workers' Lane, by one of those chances which are not mere happenings, he came up with this friend, carrying two baskets slung from a pole upon his shoulders.

"Are you going home, A Ch'i?" he asked, laying a hand upon the end of the carrying-pole.

"Yes," said the man, turning his head and recognizing the speaker.

The acquaintances walked along the lane together, talking as they went.

"I hear that you have joined the 'Jesus Church,' A Ch'i. Are you sure that there is nothing wrong in its teaching?"

"Nothing wrong, did you say? I was a vegetarian and thought in time to become a Buddha, but I gave up the hopes of years, so sure was I that its teaching was better than that of other sects."

Mao turned and looked at his companion. Then he said quietly, "I must enquire about it."

Not long after, the acquaintances met once more on their way home from work.

"Who was Jesus? Was he a man or a spirit?" queried Mao, plunging at once into the

¹ Phrase used by the heathen when speaking of Chinese Christians.

middle of the subject with which his mind was occupied.

"He is the Son of God who came to this world in the time of the Han Dynasty," answered his friend.

The enquirer was full of questions about the Western Sage. Who were his father and mother? Where was he born? Who were his disciples, and what did they do? It was evident from his manner that he was deeply interested. A hunger seemed to have taken hold of him—a longing to discover whether the religion of Jesus might not help a man to live a better life.

"Why not come and worship God with us?" asked Ch'i.

"I must find out more about it, before taking such a step. Is the 'Jesus Church' a true Church?"

"It is truer than any other."

"If the 'Jesus Church' be thus right, I ought to be the more careful to be right myself."

Something in the words, coming as they did from a heathen, struck his companion; who never before had met with one so anxious to do right. The phrase rang in his ears and lived long after in his memory—"I ought to be the more careful to be right myself."

Mao's enquiries must have satisfied him so

far, for before long we find him snatching brief moments from his street vending, to go into the preaching hall and stand there listening to the Word of Life, until a sense of duty drove him out again into the darkness.

Meantime Uncle Chhieh, although continuing to do some work at the shop, had fallen into poor health. His other sons being too casual to undertake such a responsibility, the care of him fell largely to Mao, who found it difficult enough to satisfy the querulous humours of the invalid.

One morning he bought some eels, esteemed a great delicacy by the people of the district, and, taking them to the shop, began to prepare them for cooking. The eels were fresh from the tub, and one of them slipped through his fingers and fell upon the tiles. His father, who was superintending the operation at the moment, lost his temper and struck him, and he, fearing lest the old man might injure himself by falling into a tempest of passion, made no complaint, but knelt down upon the floor, protesting that he would not rise therefrom until he had been forgiven and received once more to favour.

The workmen gathered round. Presently one of them said :

“Look at this now ! Big-headed Mao uses money, earned upon the street whilst other folk

are resting, to buy eels for his father to eat, and the old fellow must needs fly into a rage and strike him for no reason at all, upon which Mao gets down upon his knees and asks forgiveness. Here is filial piety indeed ! ”

About this time the young man's growing interest in Christianity was so much staggered by the discovery that in some instances the teaching of Christ differed from that of Confucius, that he put the new doctrine out of his thoughts, and tried to occupy his mind with other things. In the providence of God, at this juncture, there fell into his hands a book, called *The True Doctrine Accurately Weighed*, which met his difficulties and turned his mind once more towards Christianity. An acquaintance made almost simultaneously with a colporteur named Chhie-gi, also helped him greatly. Stimulated to still deeper interest by the book which he had just read, he discussed Christianity afresh with this new friend. “Tell me,” said he at their first interview, “where this teaching springs from, and what are its authorities. How comes it to be proclaimed in China? You who sell the books of the ‘Jesus Church’ ought to know.”

The colporteur, delighted to meet with such an enquiring spirit, answered his questions and explained the plan of salvation to him in simple terms.

Night after night the young man braved his father's anger and went to Chhieh-gi's house, and after the fifth visit resolved that, come what might, he would go to church on the ensuing 'worship day' and learn more about the gospel.

That Sunday the preacher read and explained the third chapter of the First Epistle to St. Timothy, showing the need of character, pure home life and a good name and conscience in the Christian ministry; also, that while all within the church were equal before God, bishops and teachers were to be respected and brothers of lower degree cared for as brethren. This teaching, little fitted as it might seem to be to attract a heathen mind, greatly helped the seeker, who had heard from his uncle and from others that the foreign sect was innocent of both rule and discipline. Where he had expected confusion, he found ordered government. What struck him most of all was, that the members of the so-called barbarian church were instructed to show deference to those in authority.

Next evening he asked his new friend what Christians taught regarding the duty of children to their parents. Chhieh-gi read the fifth commandment to him as an answer to the question.

"Good! the sacred book tells men to rever-

ence their parents. But if one's parents are opposed to the gospel and hinder one from going to hear it—what then?"

"Your father seeks your good, so far as he understands it," answered his friend. "At first, whilst unacquainted with the truth, he cannot but be annoyed by your worshipping God. Afterwards, when he knows more about it, he will surely change his mind."

As the meaning of Christianity dawned upon Mao, endless questions arose in his mind. It was the beginning of a conflict, which was to shake the world he knew to its foundations.

He read and thought and thought again, as he wrought with his book ever open before him, in the room behind the busy shop. His companions would notice him with a bowl of rice, an open volume, and the upper of a shoe engaging his attention at apparently the same time. He would eat a mouthful of food, work a bit, read a bit, then eat again, and as he worked, he turned over in his mind what he had read.

Before long the old Yamen Secretary came to know of his nephew's visits to the South Street Church, and reproved him sharply for frequenting such a place.

"When the barbarians are seized by the

mandarins, or disappear, leaving the Christians to their fate, you will have bitterness and sorrow, but repentance then will be too late. You'd better listen to me and have no more to do with these people."

The young man received this outburst with the deferential silence which a well-trained junior at that time showed to his elders in China. Presently his uncle stopped abruptly, and, with a parting injunction to mend his ways, hurried him off to his work.

Mao went slowly out of the house and turned his steps towards the shop, his mind in a whirl of conflicting thoughts. That evening he said to the colporteur, "I am in great trouble. To disobey my elders would be to put myself in the wrong; not to obey the truth which I have discovered would also be wrong. What am I to do?"

Once more his friend helped him, by pointing out that the dilemma was not so serious as it seemed to be at first sight, since the difficulty was created by commands not equally binding. "Your relatives are but men and women, the 'Supreme Ruler' is Lord over all. His will is paramount. Are you anxious to obey your superiors? Then first of all you must obey God."

Everything seemed to be against the solitary

wrestler now. At home, in the shop, in his own heart, there was trouble. The strife of the gospel call had touched him, its calm had not yet fallen upon his spirit.

CHAPTER IV

QUESTIONS

“ It is a wonderful and a terrible thing to watch the development of a human spirit.”—FORBES ROBINSON.

IN 1882 the eldest son of the family, Pai-Ch'ien, having become assistant secretary to a neighbouring magistrate,¹ there was more comfort in the home at Lowfield Pond. Perhaps his father was a little less exacting now that there was better provision for the family, perhaps his brother's absence lessened the strictness of the daily espionage upon his doings, perhaps also for other reasons, Mao was now able more frequently to join the gatherings which were held on warm summer evenings beneath the trees, in front of the South Street Church.

When first he attended these services he would sit with bright eyes fixed upon the speaker, who well remembers how his keen glance followed everything that was done ; its dark gleam flashing as he moved his position to avoid the heads and shoulders of the audience which happened to obstruct the line of vision. By the ministry of

¹ The magistrate of Nan-an.

the word the Lord and lover of men's souls drew this enquiring spirit onwards. Thus the seeking Saviour looking through the preacher's eyes and the soul that answered Him with its deep gaze, drew near with mutual recognition, like those who "meet and claim each other for the first time."

By and by Mao gained enough of courage to join shyly in the discussions which followed the services at the church, and the Christians, already attracted by his personality, took much delight in talking over his difficulties with him, whenever he could spare time to receive instruction. The young seeker after truth was so full of curiosity, that as soon as one question was answered he would ask another, and, when satisfied at length for the time being, would go away, only to return with fresh enquiries. His busy brain was always thinking, pondering.

"Teacher," he would say, "last night you said so and so."

"Yes, I did."

"Well then, to-day you say so and so."

"Yes, that is so."

"But these statements do not seem to agree."

Then would come an explanation.

As the conversation with his friend the colporteur, recorded above, would indicate, Mao's chief difficulty at the outset, was how to reconcile

the Christian scheme of things with the demands of filial piety. His great aim in life so far had been to reverence his parents. He fed scantily and worked overtime, in order to provide an ailing father with the comforts which he needed, and hoped, after his parents' death, to follow their spirits with dutiful and lifelong service. How then could he bring himself to believe in teaching which interfered in any way with the worship of the departed ?

He fought this, his first battle of the faith, contesting every inch of ground with a loyalty to the traditions of his race which was pathetic. At last, after many arguments, he came to see that the devotion of true sonship was not a matter of outward observance but of the heart, and when one of the preachers quoted the instance of some ancient worthies highly reputed for their filial piety, who were never said to have offered sacrifices to their dead ancestors, his mind was set at rest upon this subject.

Another problem was sin. What was sin ? Were all men sinful ? Was he a sinner ? The preacher argued with him about inherited tendencies to evil, faults of temper and disposition, and that disobedience to the Heavenly Father which is our chief transgression. Mao was staggered, especially by the last consideration, but it was not easy to bring home a sense of guilt to one, who had, so far as he knew, been always

true to his convictions. He thought that he was a good man, and it was only after a struggle that the truth revealed itself, when, crushed by an overwhelming sense of his own unworthiness, he fell at the feet of the Crucified.

After this Mao pursued his enquiry step by step, the questions which he raised covering practically the whole range of Chinese belief and custom affected by Christianity. What about the idols and their worship? Was it right to forsake the traditions of one's fathers? Could the Church of Jesus, apparently "a school of strange doctrine"—such as the Sacred Edict¹ enjoined one to beware of—be accepted in China? Was the Saviour divine? How came God to have a Son? Had man three souls or only one?² Why should a day of rest be observed? What happened after death? What was the last day? Such were the questions which he studied with indefatigable industry.

As time went on, the less discerning among the Christians began to doubt the patient enquirer, and even to imagine that he must have some questionable motive in joining their worship, for he was shy—almost furtive in manner—as if scarce daring to show himself in church, whilst probing every nook and

¹ The Sacred Edict of the Emperor K'ang-hsi published by his son.

² Many of the Chinese believe that man has three souls.

cranny of their beliefs with the persistency of an investigating lawyer. Entirely ignorant of these suspicions, Mao pursued his study of the faith, with a thoroughness which at last proved to the dullest gainsayer that he was genuinely in earnest.

In the meantime there was much to bar the path of the lonely seeker. The teaching of 'the Books,' pride in the ancient learning of his race, the traditions of the proud city in which he lived, the customs and superstitions of his family, increasing persecution at home and in the shop, the opposition of a stern and exacting father, the exigencies of toil and the suspicions of the Christians, all united to hinder one, naturally timorous in disposition, from entering the kingdom of heaven. Even the desire to know more of God, which now burned in his bones like fire, would have died out, and he must have turned from his quest, had not something happened. But something did happen: he learned to pray. This came about most naturally. His difficulties, if the figure of speech may be allowed, overreached themselves. The billows and waterspouts had gone over his head; he was powerless to save himself; there was nothing for it but to cast his soul on God. The preacher had prayed with him, and the colporteur had told him that when men

asked the Heavenly Father to help them, He would surely give them aid. Why then not make the experiment? So he argued.

He was in his solitary workroom when, thus worn out by doubt and misery, he took a piece of paper and wrote:

“Supreme Ruler, O Thou most High,
I pray Thee to show me Thy way,
I vow obedience to Thy will.”

The rest of the vow is lost to us, for this sacred moment was rudely interrupted by several of the workmen, who burst into the room, and, seizing upon the writing, began to make fun of its author. Fortunately for him, a man named Mei, who had been favourably impressed by the behaviour of his quiet companion, now interfered on his behalf. The paper tore, as Mei dragged it from the hand of one of the roisterers, but by smoothing it out and piecing it together afterwards, he was able to decipher the first three lines of the inscription which are quoted above.

From this time onwards, Mao, after his own stumbling fashion, prayed to God in secret.

One evening Ch'i met him in the street, and said:

“Do the men in the shop tease you for going to church?”

“They do, but one does not mind being teased for trying to do right.”

“Does the master blame you?”

“No.”

“Does he not object to your going to service when you have work unfinished?”

“I am on piecework, and am only paid according to my output. Why should he object?”

“But what if he dismisses you at the year’s end?”

“That will be all right.”

Mao, however, was not dismissed at the close of the season, but re-engaged for the new year, and continued to work as before at the ‘Sign of Daily Victory.’

CHAPTER V

FAMILY LIFE

“He always impressed me as a man who was naturally weak in his will; but an iron will seemed to work through him.”—FORBES ROBINSON.

FRESH opposition to Christianity arose about this time in the city, through the purchase by the new sect of a house to be used as a church, and Mao's family were consequently much annoyed, as they noticed him increasingly attracted towards the hated foreign doctrine. His elder brother voiced the feelings of the household when he said:

“You are a steady fellow, you neither gamble nor play the reprobate, why then should you follow these barbarian errors?”

Even his kindly mother had turned against the youthful student of religion before her death; for when one of his uncle's pupils had said to her: “Your A¹ Mao is going to the bad; he worships strange gods and has forsaken the ancestors,” she took the culprit's Bible and hymn-book and said to the lad, “Here are his ‘worship

¹ Prefix joined to names in familiar conversation.

books,' quick ! put them in the fire and burn them to ashes."

Another incident belonging to this period, shows the nature of that petty persecution, which the Christian enquirer has to bear with in a heathen home. One morning, early, when about to open the doors in order to sweep out the house, Mao's aunt stumbled over something on the floor. Unable to see in the dark, she took the offending obstacle for the house-dog and struck at the supposed animal with her brush, calling out, "You ill-mannered hound," "You dead dog," and so forth. Mao, for it was he, now rose from the floor, where he had been kneeling, and said :

"I was praying, and did not hear you come."

"Praying !" exclaimed the astonished woman ;
"what do you mean by that ?"

"I was speaking to God, when you stumbled over me in the dark."

His aunt threw open the door, and as the gray light stole into the room, she said sourly :

"What an unprincipled person you must be, to crouch upon the bare floor to worship your God, without so much as even a stick of incense or a candle in your hand. When I struck you by mistake for the dog, I was not so far out after all !"

"You do not understand," said Mao quietly.
"Some day, when I know more about it myself,

I shall tell you how to serve the 'Supreme Ruler.' "

Uncle Chhieh, now more exacting than ever, did all he could to prevent his son from becoming a Christian, often storming at him when he came in from his evening visits to the South Street Church.

"Why so late?" he would say. "No decent person walks the streets at such an hour. You need not answer me; I know that you are late because you have been with those Christians."

To Chhieh-gi, the colporteur, we owe some vivid glimpses into the home-life at Lowfield Pond about this time. One Sunday he called at Mao's house, to find the inmates busy worshipping before the family tablets, his friend alone refusing to take part in the ceremony. After a pause, created by his entrance, the Secretary, who had evidently been admonishing his nephew, broke into fresh reproaches.

"If you forsake your ancestors after this fashion, you will die a wretched death," said he. "Nobody will put you in a coffin, and your corpse will be thrown outside the city wall for dogs to gnaw."

When the next anniversary of his mother's death occurred, Mao went in distress to his friend the bookseller.

"They are busy preparing the offerings," he said, "and have sent to the shop for me. I have

bought nothing for the sacrifice, nor can I bring myself to bow before the tablet. My uncle and brothers will certainly beat me if I go to the house."

After praying together, the friends rapidly discussed the situation, finally deciding that Mao ought to obey the summons, and that his companion should go with him to lend his support. When together the two friends entered the door, the old Secretary called his nephew an 'unworthy son,' and quoted 'the Books' to prove that by refusing to reverence the dead he did wrong. "Your duty is to your forbears, you have no right to worship God," said he.

"By the ceremonies of the sacrifices to heaven and earth they served God,"¹ answered the young man, his heart praying for help as the words fell from his lips.

"Are you worthy to serve God?"

"'Though a man be wicked, yet if he adjust his thoughts, fast, bathe, he may sacrifice to God.'"²

His uncle made no answer.

"Wen Wang with earnest heart served God,"³ added Mao, gaining fresh courage.

The old scholar turned upon him with stately indignation.

"'The sage exhausted his heart in serving

¹ *Doctrine of the Mean*, xix. 6.

² Mencius, II, iv. 16.

³ *Book of Poetry*, Vol. IV.

God.' When you compare yourself to Wen Wang, these relatives of ours laugh you to scorn," said he.

Angry as he was, the Secretary waited for his nephew's answer, not without a feeling of interest; he had not thought him capable of holding his own so creditably in such a battle of the books.

"Emperor though he was, the sage was heaven-born no more than we are. Does not Mencius say, 'Shun was a man; I also am a man'? We are God's children. Many do not worship Him because they fail to recognize Him as their Father; it is not that God refuses to acknowledge them as His children. He says in His word, 'I will never leave thee,' though it is true that He is of different mould from us, as the 'book' says, for 'The pure made heaven, the dark made earth.'"¹

The old scholar, favourably impressed already by his nephew's spirit, was won completely for the moment by this last quotation.

"Where did you get that sentence from?" cried he, his rapidly disappearing resentment submerged beneath the rising interest of the discussion.

"From your own lips, Uncle. You perhaps may think that the teaching of our sages about higher things cannot be followed, but

¹ Cosmogony by Chu-hsi.

by God's aid I mean to follow it where I can."

The old Secretary remained silent for a moment, as if in thought; then turning to his eldest nephew, he said, "From this time onwards you must not, as in the past, attack your brother for serving God."

Mao, overjoyed by the unexpected turn which things had taken, cried: "Uncle, when I came here to-day I thought that you most certainly would beat me, but God, by turning away your anger, has answered my prayers. And more than this, you have also told my brother not to scold me for serving our Heavenly Father. Come, let us thank Him together," and with that he fell upon his knees. His uncle, though somewhat moved by this appeal, remained standing, with an ejaculated, "I—not yet. I must consider the matter; I must think it over."

If there were fewer persecutions to bear after this victory, other troubles showed themselves in the house at Lowfield Pond. Uncle Chhieh was now too infirm to go to the shop, and his second son worked at home, so as to be at hand to wait upon him continually. Their employer thought well of the young fellow, and gave orders that any money which he might need, in order to provide medicine and suitable food for his ailing father, should be

advanced to him. Such assistance was indeed most welcome, for Tu not only played truant from his bench, but, what was worse, would carry off completed work, ready to be handed in at the shop, and pawn it to raise funds for drink. Whenever this happened, Mao, fearing that their father might hear of it and endanger his life by a paroxysm of rage, would extract the pawntickets from his unrepentant brother, redeem the shoes, and send them in to the manager. Though tried almost beyond the limits of endurance, he would remonstrate with the delinquent very patiently, saying, "Our father is seriously ill; do try to help him and me by acting better."

Unknown to himself, the young man's kindness to his exacting parent was affecting his relatives, who could not but see that there was something in his behaviour different from their own lives. His careless fellow-workmen also were impressed in the same way. One of their number, a man named Lin T'u, noticed that although the other shoemakers, led by a bully known as Li A-Lou, teased and ill-treated him continually, he never lost his temper. One day, thinking that his comrade's patience had passed the bounds of honourable forbearance, Lin T'u gave way to the indignation which he felt and burst out:

"You have too little spirit, A Mao. Why

don't you get angry and pay these fellows back in their own coin?"

But he knew, as he looked into the quiet face, that his companion was right and he was wrong, and from that time onwards had a more friendly feeling towards his gentle confrère than before.

Slight as the change was, Mao noticed it, and with some foreshadowing of that instinct for seeking souls, which was to characterize him in after life, he realized that Lin T'u was likely to become interested in the gospel, and before long had succeeded in persuading him to go to church, where he might judge of the Christian teaching for himself. The impression, unconsciously produced on Lin T'u by one who at the time was nearer to the Master than he knew, deepened, until before long it grew into a genuine belief in Jesus Christ.

Another shopmate, deeply influenced by A Mao, was Ch'en Mei, the man who rescued the paper with the prayer written upon it from the clutches of the workmen. Mei, as he was called, had conceived a sincere regard for his quiet companion, whom he used to question privately about the gospel.

One day, when standing near the edge of the court outside Mao's room, a spot which to this hour remains sacred in Mei's memory, his friend came up to him and said, "A Mei, do you know that you are a sinner?"

Taken aback by the abruptness of this remark, he hesitated to reply, questioning himself as to what particular wickedness he might recently have committed.

“Every wrong thing we do is a sin,” continued his friend, as if reading his thoughts.

Then the memory of how one seventh moon, on the festival of ‘All Souls,’ he had been furiously angry when his mother prevented him from going to see a play, called ‘The Breaking of Hell,’ flashed upon Mei’s mind, and in a very deep but altogether incomprehensible manner he realized that he truly was a sinner. His anger then had been a sin; his life now was full of evil. The conviction borne in upon his mind so strangely deepened as time passed, and from that day onwards he felt that there could be no peace for him until he got right with God.

CHAPTER VI

TROUBLED WATERS

“Wears evermore the seal of his believing
Deep in the dark of solitary eyes.”—F. W. H. MYERS.

THOUGH but a learner himself, Mao was most anxious that his brothers should become Christians.

“Ah, brother!” he would plead, “Ah, brother, just go to church with me for once, to see what the service is like. Come and hear whether the teaching of the foreigners is good or not.”

The unwilling listener turning a deaf ear to all entreaties, he would continue to urge his request, praying, pleading, persuading, until the coveted boon was granted. But little good resulted from these appeals. The elder brother remained opposed to the gospel, whilst Tu the younger became a cause of ever-increasing anxiety and expense.

In the midst of a drinking bout during his father's last illness, Tu went to the house to find something on which he could raise money at a neighbouring pawnshop. His aunt entered

the room where he was at the moment, and divining his intention, told him not to rob his father. Excited by liquor as he was, Tu, who was in no mood for remonstrances, answered her entreaties with a threat. The old woman laying her hand upon a piece of furniture, which he was about to take away with him, he pushed her to one side and made off with his booty. The push, more vigorous than had been intended, sent the bound-footed woman headlong to the floor, and when the other members of the household came upon the scene, the miscreant had disappeared, and his aunt was lying with a broken thigh upon the ground.

On another occasion, after losing heavily at cards, Tu carried off a table and the wooden shrine in which the ancestral tablets of the family were kept, and sold them to pay his debts. His fiery-tempered father was so much upset by this act of sacrilege, that, ill as he was, he threatened to scald his son to death, or to smother him in quicklime. These menaces producing no effect, early one morning the old man took a great kettle of boiling water, and, going to Tu's bedside, was about to pour its contents over his eyes and down his open mouth. But when he saw his son, lying like a child asleep, his heart smote him; changing his purpose, he went to the other end of the bed and dropped some of the scalding liquid upon a naked foot,

which was projecting from underneath the coverlet. The culprit awoke with a yell, rolled off the bed, and in another moment was far beyond pursuit.

The religious differences of the family were an unfailing cause of trouble to A Mao, who, gentle as he was, could not see his relatives indulge in heathen ways without protest.

One morning, when he remonstrated with them for worshipping the idols, his uncle, ruffled by an earnestness incompatible with traditions opposed to enthusiasm of every kind, was very much annoyed. In his indignation the old gentleman used a word descriptive of forcing water down a calf's gullet, to make it look fat on market day, to indicate how in his estimation his nephew not only told the truth, but forced it also upon unwilling hearers. The expression which he used was all the racier because of the apt manner in which it rhymed with 'telling' in the Chinese. "This is not *telling* the doctrine, it is *compelling* people to swallow it, whether they will or not," said he. "If you must preach, please go elsewhere and do not lecture us in our own house."

In the year 1881, when Mao was thirty years of age, his father died. The loss was all the sadder, perhaps, because a lurking sense of relief suggested only too plainly how great a separation had existed before death. The straitened

circumstances of the family also added sordid care to ordinary grief. More money had to be borrowed to meet the funeral expenses, and, as usual, Mao had to arrange the loan.

The other members of the family, who would do nothing to provide the money, busied themselves in preparing the rites for the dead, and covered the most truly filial of their number with reproaches, when for conscience' sake he refused to take part in the idolatrous ceremonies which followed. They little knew, nor could they have understood even had they known, the agony of soul through which he passed, when he broke with traditions dearer to him than life itself, and refused to bow before the spirit of his dead father.

CHAPTER VII

‘SEEKING GOODLY PEARLS’

“Then he gave me a book of Jesus his inditing, to encourage me the more freely to come ; and he said concerning that Book, that every jot and tittle thereof stood firmer than Heaven and earth.”—JOHN BUNYAN.

THE troubles which he met with both at home and in the shop, as well as the demands of his own enquiring disposition, drove Mao to the study of the Bible. There was much within its pages of which he was most ignorant.

One evening he went to talk over some texts from the Old Testament with his former guide, Ch'i, and soon had carried the good man far beyond his depth. There was no satisfying one so greedy of knowledge as he was, and when in some instances the answers received were unsatisfactory, he would put fresh questions, his keen intellect shearing its way to the heart of matters, humility keeping him at his instructor's feet the while, in a manner which could not but be distressing to the good old shoemaker.

Hard pressed at last, Ch'i said frankly enough :
“I am but a working man, a learner like your-

self. If you wish to know the deeper meaning of Scripture you must go to the preacher at the South Street, who will answer your questions better than I can.”

Surprised and somewhat shamed by the astonishing progress of his disciple, Ch’i afterwards confessed to one of his friends that it was awkward to discuss things with Mao, adding that “Ten men could not tell him all he wished to know about the Bible.”

Mao, who had hit upon the Socratic method for himself, was continually asking questions; seeming to divine by instinct that he had something to gain from everyone he met, and that by patient questioning it could be discovered.

One of the missionaries¹ tells how the untiring student would sidle close up to him and say: “Is the teacher at leisure?” If the answer were propitious, he would take a dog-eared book from underneath his arm and turn up passages about which he was perplexed. As his questions were answered one by one, he would nod his head and say “Right! Right!” When all the explanations had been given, he would go away to con the verses thoughtfully once more. He did not accept teaching without thinking it over and digesting it; comparing what one person told him with what others said.

¹ The Rev. John Watson.

When his mind was satisfied, he would note the result upon the margin of his Bible, which he read and scribbled upon continually, until the book fairly dropped to pieces.

Thinking of this side of his busy life, to the exclusion of its other activities, this friend writes :

“ He was a man who might have said, ‘ This one thing I do.’ He loved God’s word. His mind was always working at it. We used to travel a good deal on foot together ; as he was a slow walker, he continually fell behind me on the road. Often when I was marching on ahead, I would hear a shuffling sound behind me, and Mao would come hurrying up. As I half turned back to meet him, the worn Bible would be produced from his coat sleeve and the inevitable question put to me.”

Whilst cooking, or even when washing clothes, the indefatigable reader might be seen with an open book beside him, so that every now and then he might turn and look at a verse or two as he worked. At night he took the New Testament to bed with him and read during sleepless moments by the light of a small lamp, kept burning for the purpose. One of the Yingnei friends tells how, when belated at the church, he repeatedly declined invitations to sleep with him, fearing lest he should kick over the lamp and set fire to the bed when turning in his sleep. Often at the close of a tiring day,

Mao would open his Bible and read until the last of his companions had gone to rest, and the first of them to rise next morning would see him already seated at the table, deep in study. As an acquaintance afterwards said: “He had his heart set upon God’s truth. I never saw anyone read the Scriptures as he did.” This habit of study reacted on his friends. He scarcely needed to exhort them to read their Bibles, but he read his own, until the moral pressure of persistent example was almost more than a slothful-minded Christian could bear. He imagined other people to be as eager for God’s word as he was himself, and those admitted to his companionship who did not read the Scriptures diligently began to do so, because he took it for granted that they did. It was this radiant charity, this unhesitating faith in others, which shamed them out of their faults and made Mao’s life a power for good among his friends.

One morning he went to call upon a visitor at Dr. Grant’s house in Chuanchow, but catching a glimpse as he passed the window of someone busy reading, he concluded that the stranger was intent upon the Scriptures, and stole away unnoticed. After a time he returned in hopes of being received; but the guest was still busy reading, so once more he crept away on tiptoe. Later in the day he went back again, his interest

in the expected interview raised to the highest degree by what he had seen, only to find the student poring over his book as before. Impressed by such assiduity, he said to one of the Christians, whom he met outside the house, "The teacher So-and-so is reading his Bible ; he reads it all day."

Some idea of how this love of the Scriptures struck his Chinese fellow-Christians, may be gathered from the following extract from a minute of session of the South Street Church :

"He laboured to read the sacred classic like the prophet of old who 'did eat the book.' It was as though he had it within his belly, its sacred fire upon his lips. . . .

"He searched into the meaning of each chapter, verse and character, studying the context of phrases and sentences, probing them to the foundation. For this reason he made increasing progress in knowledge, and his interpretation of the Scriptures was fresh and lively."

IN THE FIGHTING LINE

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW LIFE

“To have found the truth and not to have found it, are as unlike as gold and leather.”

MOU TSU, translated by Prof. H. A. GILES.

KEEN as he now was to study the truth, Mao was not yet wholly free from the trammels of the old life which bound him.

After his father's funeral he could go to church but once upon a Sunday, having to work during the remainder of the day in order to repay debts, incurred at the time of the illness and death.

After about a year, however, he had returned so much of the money due, that he was able to keep the day of rest unbroken. In the summer of 1882, the last remaining obstacles to his formal acceptance of Christianity having thus been removed, he was approved by the minister and session of the South Street Church as a sincere follower of Christ, and so, in the thirty-third year of his age, he was baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, one God.

The years of probation were now at an end. If the difficulties which they brought with them had been great, his courage in meeting them had been greater. His enquiries had touched on many of the problems naturally arising to the mind of an intelligent heathen, brought up among literary people and steeped in the Confucian spirit; that strange blend of ethics, materialism and superstition. The discipline which this involved, no doubt enabled him to help seekers after truth in later days. Every inch of the battlefield was familiar ground. Consequently he often saw the thought behind the words of an opponent, and with a 'sweet reasonableness,' which kept all heat out of the discussion, spoke to his heart's need.

It was this combination of knowledge and of gentleness, which made him almost irresistible in debate with the heathen.

Religion as he now knew it, meant a living union with the living Lord, not a mere belief in certain doctrines. He had become one in that great series of indwelt souls, which reveals the Christ to men—the repeating decimal of grace which runs across the ages. The Holy One who lived of old in Galilee, had come to walk the streets and villages of Chuanchow in the person of this lowly working man.

Much as he shrank from publicity, the life which now inspired the growing Christian urged

him ever to proclaim the love which gave itself in death for men upon the cross. Neither taunts nor threats could turn him from this work.

Once, when speaking to a group of people in the city, someone said to him :

“Whoever joins the ‘barbarian sect’ will be taken alive and beaten to death.”

“Who says so, my friend?”

“A proclamation to this effect has just been issued by the magistrate.”

“But even though the worshippers of the ‘Supreme Ruler’ were to be seized and beaten, they would still be safe.”

“Who would save them when the Mandarins were beating them to death?”

“Their bodies would suffer, their souls would go to be with God in heaven.”

Mao's courage in preaching and his growth in Christian knowledge were so remarkable, that in the winter of 1882 he was ordained a deacon. Absorbed as he was in Bible study and in preaching to the heathen, he proved himself none the less efficient in collecting the congregational subscriptions from the Christians and in the discharge of business matters connected with his new office. It has been said that the church accounts were never better kept than when they were in his hands.

One day he had occasion to ask a member

named Uncle River for the unpaid balance of a subscription, promised towards the church funds at the beginning of the year. With some heat the subscriber protested, that he had already paid something over and above the money promised, and proceeded to charge the deacons with being careless in the keeping of their accounts.

"I beg your pardon," said Mao, laying a hand upon his knee, "it may be that I have made a mistake. Come, let us go over the figures together. On such-and-such a day you paid me 100 cash," he continued, pointing to a column of the book.

"Yes," said the other.

"Next month you gave me 80."

"Right, Brother Mao."

The list of sums paid was gone through in this way; old River, disarmed by the deacon's willingness to be blamed, agreeing without demur to each item as it was read in turn.

"Now I shall call over the amounts and you can add them together," said Mao.

The sum was soon cast up, and to the disputant's confusion he had to confess himself in the wrong.

Instead of blaming the man, Mao only said how very glad he was to have the account settled. This incident, trivial as it may appear to be, made a great impression upon the Chuan-

chow Christians, who, in common with their race, rank patience and good temper among the leading virtues.

At the end of the year, the reports of the recently appointed deacon's services being entirely satisfactory, Dr. Grant employed him as a colporteur to sell books and to preach the gospel in the city and surrounding district. Before accepting this engagement Mao had to obtain his employer's permission, for the custom of the city shoe-trade then was, that if for any reason one of the hands desired to leave before the end of the year, all advances previously made to him must be repaid in labour or in money before he went. In spite of this rule and in spite of the fact that the year being far advanced, every available worker was needed to get export orders ready for Formosa, his master consented to his leaving, and said :

"You certainly may go. Don't trouble to repay the money just now, return it whenever you can afford to do so."

On the day that Mao for the last time left the little room, now sacred with memories of struggle and of communion, Mei was so troubled by the loss of his companion, that when on his way to the shop, he missed the accustomed turning in South Street and went wandering up the street. But though their connexion at the 'Sign of Daily Victory' thus came to an end,

their friendship was to be continued through many years. Left to fight his battle alone, Mei held his own gallantly. His brothers, who were shoemakers like himself, threw every obstacle in the way of his religious aspirations, even following him in the streets sometimes to prevent him from going to church.

One Sunday when he was at work with his coat off for the sake of coolness, the younger of them was sitting not far from the peg where the garment was hanging. Mindful of his friend's injunctions, Mei hoped to slip out of the work-room that morning and go to the service in South Street. Seeing, however, that there was no chance of obtaining his jacket without arousing his brother's suspicions, he laid down his tools, ran home regardless of naked shoulders, put on another coat, and went to the church.

Seeing what had happened, his brother said :

“Let him go ; when a man is as much in earnest as that, you cannot keep him from serving God.”

Not long afterwards Mei took typhoid fever, and his relatives, believing that the idols had ‘seized’ him for apostasy, left him to his fate. Hearing of the poor fellow's dangerous plight, Mao and some of the other Christians nursed him through the fever, two of their number attending him night and day whilst the sickness was at its height. The family, so far from appre-

ciating the work of these good Samaritans, would let them have neither wood nor water to cook with, so that the young fellows were obliged to provide food, medicine and fuel for the invalid out of their own pockets. So far did Mei's relatives carry their unnatural animosity, that they would snatch burning wood from beneath the pot in which chicken soup or some other nourishment was being prepared for the sufferer, and use it to cook their own meals. After a trying illness the patient recovered, was received into the Church, educated at the theological college, and is now ordained minister of the Brookend congregation.

The manner in which Mao and his companions cared for their brother in the faith during this illness, made a considerable impression upon the heathen people of the neighbourhood, and so prepared the way for the spread of the gospel among them, although, strangely enough, the family chiefly concerned remained entirely unmoved.

CHAPTER IX

BARBARIAN SLAVES

“Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,
Yes, without stay of father or of son,
Lone on the land and homeless on the water
Pass I in patience till the work be done.”

F. W. H. MYERS.

THE work of colportage took the newly appointed messenger of the cross away from the care of the sick and other duties of his office in the city, to carry the gospel story into the outlying towns and villages of the surrounding district. Such an occupation as that to which he had now given himself had special difficulties for one in whom physical timidity co-existed with high moral courage to no ordinary extent. The risks and perils of travel daunted his heart, the constraining power of a new affection urged him to unflinching service. This was amply illustrated, as we shall see, at once by the manner in which he shrank from the wandering life of a colporteur and by the iron determination with which he entered upon that calling. A proverb often used by the inhabitants of Chuanchow says,

“They that fare abroad have bitterness and trouble,” for people bred in narrow lanes naturally do not minimize the discomforts of roads, as bad as those of Europe during the Middle Ages. When we remember that Mao had scarcely ever been beyond the walls of the city, we can better understand how, in 1882, setting out with Chhieh-gi to sell books and preach the gospel among the seaward villages of the district, he took the proposed journey very seriously indeed, and shortly after they had started remarked to his companion :

“Remember that if I die when upon this expedition, you must send word to my friends.”

As they travelled along the road together, the comrades halted every now and then to sell their books. At one place, where Mao was speaking to a group of people, some of whom had purchased copies of the gospel, one of the audience interrupted his address by saying, “You are barbarian slaves, you are no better than barbarian beasts of burden.”

“You are mistaken, brother,” said Mao. “The foreigners do not come to our country to make slaves of people ; they come to tell them how they may be saved from bondage.”

“It is not true,” said the man ; “you have eaten the barbarian medicine and it has changed your heart. That is why you are bound to do

what the barbarians tell you, and go about spreading their detestable heresies."

"You have neither grandfather nor grandmother,"¹ jibed the crowd, "you are barbarian slaves."

"And your slaves too, if you will," said Mao, "for we seek to serve you without reward. Is not this to be your slaves?"

One man pressed rudely against the speaker, another struck him with the edge of his bamboo sun-hat. Mao raised his hand. The crowd paused to see what would follow.

"I have no reproaches for you," said he; "listen," and then he continued his address regardless of reproach or danger.

On went the colporteurs, preaching and selling books in the villages to which they came, as they journeyed southwards. At last Chhieh-gi, seeing that evening was coming on, began to protest.

"The sun goes down behind the western hills, brother, let us hasten," said he.

"Wait a bit, we must tell these people something more about God's truth," said Mao, plunging again into his discourse.

After an interval of waiting, there was another protest, to which the only answer was: "A few

¹ The heathen taunt the Christians with having neither grandfather nor grandmother when they give up worshipping their ancestors.

more words and the message will be finished ; let us tell these people all we can before we go."

In the course of a day or two, the companions reached a village near Hsiang-chih, at the mouth of the Chuanchow River, where they began to preach. The villagers were not at all inclined to listen to their message, and one of the younger men was aggressively insolent. Ignoring their incivility, Mao told them how once a preacher went to an island named Melita. The inhabitants were barbarous people, yet they treated him with no little kindness, and, when he left them, sent him away loaded with gifts. "Why should you be harsh to strangers?" he asked. "The Master said,¹ 'When friends come from a distance is it not joyful?' Why should you be less hospitable than the outer barbarians?"

The man who had already been rude to them now became furious, and, taking up a jar of filth, dashed its contents over Mao. The bystanders, indifferent to the gospel as they were, remonstrated with the young fellow, but the preacher interposed in his behalf, saying:

"Don't blame him ; he does not understand," and taking off his upper garments laid them, stained and dripping, by the roadside. Then he spoke out of the love of his heart to the crowd which had assembled, telling them of Jesus

¹ *Confucian Analects*, Book I, ch. i. 3.

Christ and of the forgiveness which He brings, as well to the unthankful and ignorant as to those better disposed.

The young man's anger died away. Something of the calm of the speaker's voice invaded his spirit, and the harsh nature softened. With a sudden impulse he moved quickly to the roadside and picked up the soiled clothes, wishing to make the *amende honorable*, by washing them for their patient owner.

Mao thanked him warmly for his offer, but would not let him wash the coats.

"If you will but come and preach to us another day, I will not throw filth upon you," said the youth, now much subdued.

Mao had won his heart, for not long afterwards, the lad found his way to the church at Hsiang-chih, where he continued to worship until he went abroad, to the Straits Settlements.

After leaving the village, Chhieh-gi, wondering much at his companion's patient endurance of the ill-treatment which he had undergone, said to him :

"If I had been so handled I could not have stood it."

"‘Love endureth all things,’ brother. If we had quarrelled with the lad we might never again have had such an opportunity of telling him the gospel."

At another village near the sea, Mao saw a couple of lazzaroni searching their clothes for vermin, as they sat by the roadside in the sun, and, according to his wont, found a text in what he saw.

“Come and worship God, my friends,” said he, “and by and by, when you go to be with Him in heaven, you will have no such pests to trouble you.”

“You know all about it, because you have just come down from there, to tell everyone the news,” jeered one of the pair, with a sideward glance at his companion.

“You are mistaken, friend. I have not been in heaven, but I know something about it from this book.” Opening his Bible, he read to them about the better land, then, turning to St. Matthew’s Gospel, read also of “the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched.” After that he told them about God, who made even the insects which prey on men and maintains the course of nature, causing spring, summer, autumn, winter to follow in their order, for the good of all created things.

“Why did God make such creatures to trouble us?” queried the beggars.

“That men might be driven to seek a higher, cleaner life, and come at last to heaven,” was the answer. “Whilst still on earth you must serve this God and seek this heaven, then you

will not go dressed in rags and devoured by vermin."

One of the pair, impressed as much by the loving spirit of the speaker, as by his message, asked eagerly when there would be a service to which he could go at the neighbouring village of Hsiang-chih ; then, rising from the ground, he put on his coat and insisted that the preachers should accompany him to his home. It was a poor hovel, but Ts'ai T'u, for that was its owner's name, gave them a kindly welcome and made them eat the noonday meal with him before they left.¹ This they did, rejoicing greatly that God had opened the beggar's heart to the gospel. Next Sunday both men, anxious to hear more about the new doctrine, attended service at the neighbouring church.

Another story, which we owe to the tenacious memory of Mao's companion, Chhieh-gi, also gives an idea of the manner in which the colporteur preacher was able to influence the heathen mind, from the very outset of his career.

At Bighouse, a village by the sea, he came upon two women who were fighting and asked them to desist. The combatants, who were sisters-in-law, paused on being suddenly accosted by a stranger, and Mao made such good use of the opportunity thus accorded him, that the battle was not resumed. In the quiet which followed,

¹ In China professional beggars are not necessarily poor.

he told the women and their neighbours of that peace, which keeps the heart and governs the tongues of those who know God's truth, and besought them to obey its teaching.

Next day the husband of one of the women, wishing to bring an action against the aggressor in the fight, called on Mao and asked him whether he would give evidence in his behalf.

"Better smooth matters over, brothers and their families ought to live at peace with one another," said Mao ; "why go to law?"

The man insisted that he must bring his grievance before the magistrate.

"You will but spend money and aggravate the quarrel, my friend. Come, let us see if there is not another way out of the difficulty."

At last the man gave up the intended law-suit, made up matters with his sister-in-law, and from that time onwards weekly crossed the sand dunes, to worship God at Hsiang-chih.

CHAPTER X

TELLING THE STORY

“ O Father, touch the East and light
the light that shone when Hope was born.”

NOTWITHSTANDING physical timidity, Mao was in many ways specially fitted for the pioneer work to which, in the providence of God, he had been called. Whilst versed in the ways of business people and the street life of a great city, he was fairly acquainted with ‘the Books,’ and with those tags and phrases which make the language of China’s literary men a dialect almost by itself.

As we have seen, personal experience rendered him familiar with the difficulties created in the heathen mind by contact with Christianity, whilst patient study gave him an increasing knowledge of the Scriptures.

It was a tireless soul which he threw into the task of winning men and women to the Saviour, a soul that strove on ever for the good of others with a zeal, only equalled by the unreserved devotion with which it gave itself to the Divine Master. When preaching to the heathen, he would become so intent upon persuading them,

that he would forget about himself and his surroundings, sometimes in his eagerness crouching down at their feet upon the ground; as one of his friends put it, "like a beggar beating a bamboo drum¹ and dinning folk for cash."

"Listen!" he would say, "listen! I will tell you about our Heavenly Father, your God and mine. You must come and worship God with me."

Forgetting an embarrassing natural timidity in the greatness of his longing to rescue perishing souls, he would stretch out eager hands to stop people on the road, unwilling that they should pass until he had told them about the way of life. Having been helped himself by books in the search for truth, he valued the printed page as a means of opening men's minds; and, whilst not anxious to sell large quantities of literature indiscriminately, he was more than anxious to put the right book into the right man's hands.

This made him fertile in devices for the sale of leaflets, tracts and gospels.

On one occasion, he went up to a travelling food vendor, who had attracted his attention, and, holding up four fingers, pointed silently at the man's wares. Another moment and a bowl, containing four cash worth of vermicelli, was steaming in his hands. When he had eaten the food, Mao persuaded the man to accept a

¹ A cylinder of bamboo covered by a piece of snakeskin at one end, used by beggars.

tract, worth six or seven cash, in lieu of payment. The exchange having been happily effected, he then read and explained the little book to its new owner.

Another of his experiences as colporteur was as follows: Happening to meet a well-dressed gentleman upon the road, he made up his mind that in some way or another the man must be induced to buy a copy of the gospels. The stranger ignored the books, however, and passed slowly on his way. Mao redoubled his efforts, but the pedestrian, who had "not a word to throw at a dog," walked quietly onwards. Mao followed him, praying as he went. Presently a fresh idea struck him, and quickening his pace he once more overtook the retreating traveller and touched him on the arm. As the gentleman looked back over his shoulder, he held out a hand and said:

"Please give me five cash, sir."

The stranger, seeing the worn dress and patched shoes of the petitioner, took him for some "starved wolf of a broken-down scholar," and, diving into his pockets, gave him the cash.

Mao received the money with thanks, and in return for his gift handed to the astonished donor a copy of the gospels. The man took the book, and God's servant retraced his steps, well contented that another portion of the Scriptures was in a needy heathen's hands.

He was ever on the alert to do good, it being often remarked, that, whilst he walked along the road, as if too much absorbed in thought to notice anything, no one was quicker than he to seize an opportunity for spreading the gospel. If opportunities did not offer, he would make them for himself, often calling upon the literati and others in their homes. If, after he had preached to these people, they did not buy his books, he would surprise them, especially teachers and their pupils, by presenting them with some tracts or copies of the gospel. His keenness in the work of colportage became a proverb, the city children making a rhyme about it, which they chanted in the streets :

“Big-headed Mao sells books with importunity,
Beggar-like a-bothering the whole of the community.”

The following incident, which happened whilst his uncle was visiting an academician named Lin, shows how Mao's physical timidity became merged in the moral boldness of the ‘new creature.’ The scholar, who unfortunately smoked opium, was talking to the old Secretary, when Mao arrived red-hot with a message for his uncle. Seeing an opium pipe and tray arranged for use upon the bed, and smelling fumes of the drug in the room, the young man, after mentioning the business which had brought him, at once began to speak about the evil of the opium habit.

"His Excellency being an academician, the unworthy younger brother would venture to suggest that, even less than other people, ought His Excellency to indulge in opium," said he.

Taking one of his tracts, he then read out several reasons for giving up the habit, commenting upon them as he went along. Mr. Lin, not a little surprised, but also somewhat impressed, listened without a word.

Chih-ch'iao, who, in the meantime, had been held spellbound by his nephew's temerity, now broke silence.

"You have no manners, A Mao; you make a mess of things, teaching people who know infinitely more than you do."

Once outside the house, he turned upon his nephew, and taxed him for his audacity.

"You must not do the like again," said he. "I never for a moment imagined that you would speak so to an academician."

"Venerable uncle," said Mao humbly, but firmly, "His Excellency is a famous scholar, and I know that you look upon him as a great man, but, if asked to change places with him to-day, I would not do so."

During the busy years which follow, we find Mao now in distant villages by the seacoast, or among the hills, now within the city and its environs. It is largely by means of the incidents or *fioretti* connected with these expeditions still

treasured in the memories of his immediate disciples, that we are able to follow the labours of this Chinese St. Francis and watch his personality slowly detach itself and take shape.

One autumn evening, after settling with remarkable success a fierce dispute which had long been raging between two villages, outside the city, he went to see a cousin of Chhieh-gi's, named Iu Hiong, who kept a 'paper-money' shop in New Street. The man listened to the gospel for a time, and then said :

"Your teaching may be right enough, but I cannot do what you tell me to do and continue to make my living by selling paper money."

"Why not change your business? Several priests and fortune-tellers have given up their callings to become Christians," said Mao.

Then he explained the way of mercy afresh, and, finding that the truths explained had entered the shopkeeper's mind, he wound up his address by teaching him how to pray.

The man, who was deeply interested, said that his children were still very young, but that when they had grown up, he would certainly worship God.

"Do not delay," said Mao, rising to go. "We never know how long we are to be in this world; life is uncertain at the best."

At the beginning of the next winter, Iu Hiong, the proprietor of the paper-money shop,

was taken ill, and sent to ask his cousin to bring the friend who first taught him to pray to God, to go and see him once more. This Chhieh-gi did, and on three successive days accompanied his companion to the sick man's house, for the poor fellow was very ill indeed and needed both comfort and instruction.

At the close of the third visit, the patient said to his visitors, "Pray with me before you go." As Chhieh-gi bent down to catch his words, the dying man put his arms round his neck and raised himself to a kneeling posture, his weary head resting upon his supporter's shoulder. The narrow room was littered with paste boxes, red dye, and bundles of paper money. Near one of the door-posts, stood the sufferer's wife. The end was near, and her heart was full of that heathen terror, which imagines "a dead man to be fiercer than a tiger." Mao knelt by the bedside and poured out his soul to God. When he reached the closing words of the prayer, "This is what our hearts desire," a tremor passed through Iu Hiong's body; he breathed deeply three times and was gone.

As the two friends gently lowered the dead limbs and composed them upon the bed, a wail of agony burst from the desolate woman at the doorway. They told the poor thing as gently as possible that her husband was not dead, but gone, as they hoped, to be with God in heaven, and

then they tried to show how she might rejoice, even whilst stricken with such lamentable sorrow.

"Rejoice," she screamed, catching at the word in a tempest of grief and anger. "You pray your God to make my husband die, and then you ask me to rejoice indeed," and with that she drove them from the room.

So bitter was the widow in her bereavement, that although the would-be comforters went more than fifty times to see her, all their efforts at consolation proved fruitless, and in the end she sold her house, in order to provide Buddhist masses for her husband's soul.

The poor and wretched had a special attraction for Brother Mao, who sought them out wherever he could find them. Two instances will give some idea of attempts which he made to work among the prisoners in the local yamens.

On his first visit to the chief jail in the city, the inmates turned a deaf ear to all religious teaching, so that he found preaching to them very uphill work indeed.

"Ask your God to make the magistrate release us from this place, then we will go and worship Him along with you," cried one of the felons bitterly.

"I would like to go with your teachers to barbarian lands," said another.

"Your guilt would cling to you wherever you went, my friend; one cannot escape the conse-

quences of sin by leaving prison," said the preacher. "Your souls are guiltier than your bodies, if you only knew it: God alone can cleanse them. He alone can take you afterwards to be with Him in heaven, which will be infinitely better than going to barbarian lands."

"If the magistrate did not give us sixty cash a day, we should starve in here," said another of the jail birds, with a careless laugh.

"Give up your evil ways and you need not worry about the meat which perisheth."

"I came here not because I worked for food, but because I killed my uncle," said the man callously.

"Long ago there was a prisoner named Paul, and when he had nothing to eat, God gave him food as well as the lives of 270 men. He can do all things for us, if only we trust ourselves to Him."

After he had preached for a time, one of the men asked their visitor to pray for him. Mao gladly engaged in prayer, and then told the prisoner how our Lord Jesus came into this world to die for sinful men, and how the vilest might receive salvation through His merits. The man drank in the message of the cross, and again besought the preacher's prayers before he left.

Once, when speaking in Nan-an jail, one of the inmates interrupted him, saying:

"If we were to give up a day in seven to worship God, we should starve."

"God feeds the birds, which neither sow nor reap, and clothes the lilies of the field. If you will but serve Him, He will care for all your bodily necessities, and will give you the forgiveness of sins as well."

"Why am I here?" said the man with suppressed passion. "I have done nothing against the law. When arrested and brought into this place, I bitterly resented the injustice shown me; many of the people in my village who are guilty go scot-free whilst I am left in irons."

"Tell me what happened," said Mao.

"I was wrongfully accused by a nephew, who came home from abroad and bribed the mandarin to have me put in jail. Once I was safe within these walls he took possession of my property and sold my fields. Will you ask your God to right this wrong? Perhaps He will hear your prayer."

In that strange oratory Mao lifted up his soul and pled with God, to deliver the poor fellow from the net in which he had been entangled.

Two or three days later, the prayer was answered, the prisoner being set free and his property restored to him. The man, whose name was Lin Pa-ko, was overjoyed by this unhoped-for deliverance, and, whenever he had an opportunity, used to attend service at the church, nearest to the distant village where he lived.

CHAPTER XI

A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST

“ And others had trial of cruel mockings.”

THOSE who saw much of Brother Mao noticed that, whilst ordinarily grave, if not stern-looking, his face would light up when people opposed his message or persecuted himself. Perpetual encounters with the heathen, under every kind of circumstance, served to call forth the unexpected powers of soul and temper which dwelt beneath an almost commonplace exterior.

Once, he took his stand under the eaves of a shop in the South Street of the city and began to speak to the passers-by. The owner of the shop, annoyed by the crowd which rapidly collected to listen, left his counter, and, climbing up by the back of the building, crept to the edge of the roof and emptied a bucket of slops upon the preacher's head. Though drenched by the contents of the bucket, Mao looked up to him with a smile and said: “ You need not have done this, brother, a word would have been enough to send me away.”

Then he went home, changed his clothes and began to preach again, farther up the street.

The city children, imitating their elders, would tease him, saying :

“Tell us how to worship God ; speak about Christ, and how he was nailed to a character ten frame.” ¹

Mao, who seldom refused invitations to preach the gospel, even when the request was manifestly a mischievous one, would tell the Redeemer's story to the little ones, capturing their attention by some apt illustration and retaining their interest, until they forgot to be naughty and listened of their own accord.

One of the Chuanchow Christians, named Hu, or Tiger, recalls hearing him speak to a crowd in Robe Street. The sky grew dark overhead and a distant peal of thunder resounded through the air, as evening fell. At last Mao stopped, and said :

“Good-bye, my friends, you had better go indoors ; it looks as though we might have rain presently.”

Some of the people, wishing to tease him, said :

“The rain has not come yet, wait and tell us more about how to worship God.”

Again he spoke to them. Presently the sky looked as if a heavy shower were just about to fall, and he said :

“‘I invite you,’² I must go, having neither raincoat, nor shoes for wet weather.”

¹ A cross stands for ten in Chinese.

² Phrase used in saying good-bye.

“Why didn’t the Heavenly Father tell you to put on your rain-shoes¹ before you left home to-day?” queried a voice.

“He tells me all I need to know. The rain, as you say, has not come yet; if I hurry I shall not want them. Good-bye. Come to church on Sunday and I shall try to teach you more.”

When preaching in front of the temple of the God of War, in Earth Gate Street, he described to the people the patience and humility of our Lord Jesus, and how, if men spat in His face, or struck Him upon the cheek, He would bear the indignity without a murmur. “Hey!” cried one of the crowd, “you preach His doctrines, let us see whether you can follow His example.”

Then he spat full in his face, and, thrusting a finger between his lips, scratched the gums until they bled. The preacher wiped his face in silence, then, standing in the midst of the unfriendly crowd, prayed that God might forgive his assailant and bring him to the knowledge of the truth. When these petitions were finished he went quietly down the crowded street and so made his way back to his own quarters at the South Street Church.

The people loved to annoy him whilst he was preaching, patting him on the back of the head, or striking him on the body. The children would shove each other against him

¹ Clogs used instead of the ordinary cloth shoes in wet weather.

from behind, shouting, "Be off with you." They twisted 'straw dragons' and fastened them to his cap button, or, waiting until he was absorbed in his discourse, would tie the end of his queue to a stone and await the result. Sometimes they fixed a strip of pickled mustard leaf, or a bit of paper, to its plaited tie-cord. In warm weather, when hats were discarded, a bit of a placard, torn from some wall, would be wetted and deftly stuck upon his shaved head by nimble fingers. When such things happened, Mao would pause, put aside the offending object with a good-humoured gesture, and then continue his work.

A maker of paper houses to burn for the dead attacked him, saying :

"You take the barbarians' money, you speak the barbarians' words. They wish to overthrow our Middle Kingdom. You are helping them to do so. They have bewitched you. That is why you are willing to be of the barbarian spawn, to live without grandfather or grandmother, and to have your eyes gouged out when you die." ¹

Mao made no answer ; his companion, Ch'ieh-gi, however, disputed with the man until he gave way.

Someone in the crowd said : "This preacher

¹ The heathen used to say that the missionaries took the eyeballs of their dead converts and made them into medicine.

has 'bone and stiffening,' the other is too soft." But, though the people took advantage of his imperturbable good temper, the more thoughtful among them recognized a moral force and backbone in the patient speaker.

The point where the main streets of the city cross, was the scene of such another bit of quiet heroism. Mao was preaching to a number of people there, when some roughs jostled and rudely handled him. To one man who had treated him with indignity, causing considerable pain, he only said :

"Gently, my good friend, gently."

The idlers threw stones and tiles, but he went on with his message and the opposition died away.

The care with which Mao followed up those who showed an interest in his message, almost as much as the patience with which he bore ill-usage, contributed to make him specially successful as a street preacher. If he met with, or heard of, anyone who had been impressed by the truth, he would search until he found out his home. Hu, the shoemaker, who first learnt of spiritual things whilst the rain-storm was threatening in Robe Street, tells how he owes his salvation to Mao's persistent habit of seeking out those to whom he had preached the gospel. After many invitations, he went to church one Sunday, but only to 'see the

play,' as he put it. At the close of the service, Mao singled him out from among the scattering congregation and invited him into the little room, opening off the front court, where he usually lodged when in the city. There he told him many things about God and read passages from the Bible, which he carefully explained. Before Hu left, he gave him luncheon and found out his address. On the Saturday of that and of many successive weeks, Mao called to remind him of the services on the morrow. Unable to resist such importunity, Hu yielded at last and became a Christian.

In this work of soul-winning Mao never seemed to despair of anyone. As one of the Christians said of him: "He revered even those who jeered at the truth. He preached to the older people as if they were his parents, saying to himself, 'This is my father, I must save him; this is my mother, I must save her.' The younger he sought as a father would seek his own children, dealing with each one as if there were no other soul for him to save in all the world." This spiritual optimism was fostered, no doubt, by the life of personal communion with God, of which we have indications at every turn. When about to speak for his Master, whether in the street, or in some preaching hall or church, he would stand for a moment with head thrown forward and eyes closed in silent

prayer. And when he did give his message, he did not speak like those who get what they have to say from books, but as if bearing direct witness to a well-known friend. Looking at the man himself and listening to his teaching, one knew that he had intercourse with the Saviour and spoke from the depths of his spirit.

Often he would sit under a tree in the court at the South Street, where he himself had learnt his first lessons in Christianity, with a group of people gathered round him for the study of God's word; his remarkable gift for the exposition of the Bible, having already developed sufficiently to enable him to help those, who not long before had been his teachers.

"How is it that Mao's words go deeper into my heart than the minister's?" said one of the church members, now an elder of the West Street Church in the city. For the answer to that question it was only necessary to look at his life.

CHAPTER XII

‘ BY PRAYER ’

“Whereby St. Francis, thinking truly that Bernard was asleep, rose up from his bed and set himself to pray, lifting up his hands and eyes unto heaven, and with exceeding great devotion and fervour said : ‘ My God, my God ! ’ And thus saying and sorely weeping he abode till morning, always repeating, ‘ My God, my God ! ’ ”

FIGURETTI. T. W. Arnold’s translation.

THOUGH Chih-ch’iao had been favourably impressed by the discussion on the anniversary of the death of Mao’s mother, he was as strong a Confucianist as ever, and often attacked his nephew’s views. One day, when he blamed him for leaving home too often to preach the gospel, Mao quoted Mencius’ account of the labours of Yu the Great, who “in an age of tranquillising government, thrice passed his door without entering it.”¹

“What,” said his uncle, with an accent of scorn in his voice, “would you compare your work with that of the famous emperor ?”

¹ Mencius, Book IV, Part II, ch. xx. Legge’s translation.

“Yu the Great was busied rescuing men’s bodies from the waters,” answered his nephew, “I have been sent to seek men’s souls.”

There were frequent arguments of this nature, but the growing Christian, as he found his way to fuller knowledge, was increasingly able to hold his own, to the discomfiture of his opponents ; so much was this the case, that sometimes after being put to the worse in debate, the old scholar would rise and walk away, saying shortly :

“I will argue no more with you.”

Fortunately Mao’s sister-in-law now became better disposed towards the gospel. Years afterwards she wrote : “Long ago, before I understood what he meant, my brother urged me to worship God. He taught me some hymns and, seeing that I was much occupied, he would carry the baby, draw water, and do other house-work, so as to give me leisure for study. Once, when I took very ill, he was deeply concerned, not so much because of the upset to the household, but because he feared that my soul might be lost. He spoke to me at that time most seriously, and told me to give my heart to God.

“When I got better I thought, in a half-hearted way, of going to church, but he settled the matter by hiring a sedan-chair, to carry me to the service for several Sundays in succession.

It was entirely owing to him that I came to know the truth.”¹

During his brief home visits, Mao tried to collect the family for evening prayer, but with little success. After much persuasion, one or two of their number perhaps would go to the sitting-room at the appointed hour, but, whilst he was searching for the other inmates of the house, the first comers would slip away, and by the time they had been recaptured, the second batch had already disappeared. The family also checkmated his endeavours for their good, by taunting him with Tu’s delinquencies, conveniently ignoring the fact, that, even according to the ideas which they quoted, the elders of the household were more immediately responsible for his misdeeds than was his brother.

When Mao told his aunt to worship God, she would say: “Oh, yes, we will follow your advice when your brother mends his ways.”

Then his uncle would add:

“See how Tu plays the profligate. If you can persuade him to worship God, I will do the same.”

Mao was saved from a good deal of the trouble, which he would otherwise have had to bear at home, by the fact that, when in the city, his work compelled him to live at his quarters

¹ Quoted from a letter written in later years by this lady.

beside the church, where, in order to be more free to preach the gospel, he made an arrangement with his companion, Chhieh-gi, to cook for him.

Chhieh-gi wished to do this for nothing, but Mao gently insisted on his taking some remuneration, saying :

“ You have a wife and children, I have none; you can afford to let me give you fifteen cash a day,” and so the matter was settled.

In later years, Chhieh-gi loved to tell how often he had received sympathetic help in clothes or food, from his hardly better-off companion. What impressed him most deeply, during the period in which they were associated together, was his friend's prayerfulness.

“ I lived with Mao for seven years,” he tells us, “ during which time we worked together by day, and slept side by side, wherever we could find quarters, when our labours were over. His heart was joined to the Saviour, whom he sought continually. Three or four times a night, when he thought that I was asleep, he would rise and kneel upon the bed beside me to pray, and often I heard him weep as he prayed for his brother and his uncle.” This hidden life of personal communion was a source of increasing usefulness, for, whether private or public, his actions seem to have been performed in an atmosphere

自四月初一日與結義兄弟在城內起身宿許山
初八日至蓬萊街住吳在附近鄉售書初六早
由蓬萊街起身過沙母嶺至尾樓鄉探兄弟
消息片時即行至蛇頭鄉探兄弟又行至水帽
鄉是夜宿甲兄路甚危險初八早起身至尾
樓過楊柳坑杜立打石嶺宿埔頭鄉越早起身
由彭內過彭嶺過逃軍嶺過大力過水江橋過

東關至長者坊宿越早起身至永春街住美以
美聖會十二天就附近鄉村邑及至三里湖洋鄉
念三日起程至草埔宿安立問全會念三早起身
行二十餘里被雨阻碍即宿山頂忘記鄉名僅
識鄭姓念四起程至湖頭念伍買舟下樓於念
六日赴泰山葉傳道建堂亦有喜生三天念九日
起身由陸路至溪尾及堂越早即寄舟回城內

of prayer. His more intimate friends would find him sitting in his room with closed eyes. If upon such occasions they began to speak to him, he would hold up a hand in front of his face, palm outwards, and move it slightly to right and left, as much as to say, I am engaged and must not be interrupted just now. Then they knew that he was holding communion with God. Sometimes the answers to his prayers were so direct, as to influence even the heathen.

One day, when walking with a companion, between two villages near Brookend, he found that the villagers, who had been quarrelling over the water supply for irrigating their fields, were about to settle the dispute with their guns. Seeing a fight imminent, he shouted to them to reserve their fire for a moment, and, along with his companion, hastened to place himself between the combatants.

Both sides, surprised by this interruption, lowered their matchlocks and waited until they came up.

“Listen,” said Mao, stretching out his hands to them, “I have something to say to you.” Then he began persuading them, for the love of God and for the sake of their wives and families, to give up their feud.

A revulsion of feeling moved the people, and

presently several of the leaders from both sides came up to where the would-be peacemakers were standing.

"You have come here to do good," said their spokesman, "perhaps you can settle our dispute for us. Arbitrators from the neighbouring villages have failed to bring about a reconciliation, but if you were to give your aid, our differences even now might be arranged without bloodshed."

"I do not know much about such matters," said Mao, "but the God whom I serve can change your minds and reconcile your differences. Let all be silent and I will ask Him to send rain and bring your dispute to an end. He will give you peace to-morrow." Then he lifted up his voice in prayer.

"How do you know that God will give us peace to-morrow?" queried one of the fighting men, at the close of the prayer.

"God answers prayer," said Mao; "see, the air grows cooler already. Rain will fall to-night. You will have water for your fields, and then the trouble will right itself."

That night plenty of rain fell. The water famine was over, and with it the feud came to an end, for the people were all too busy hoeing their fields to think of fighting.

Next evening the head men asked Mao to go

and preach in their villages, and from that time onwards a close bond existed between these people and himself. In after years he had the joy of seeing two of their number become members of the Brookend Church.

CHAPTER XIII

A GALA DAY

“Coming, coming, yes they are,
Coming, coming from afar.
From the fields and crowded cities,
China gathers to His feet.
In His love Shem’s gentle children
Now have found a safe retreat.”—J. W. MCGILL.

ONE Dragon-boat festival, Mao went with another Christian to preach at the temple of the Holy Mother of Heaven, inside the South Gate of the city. Standing on the granite steps in front of the building, he read to a large crowd the following words: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strifes, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings and such like, of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

As it happened, three beggars were lying on a pallet, behind the door at the top of the temple steps, smoking opium, and as the sound of the

reading reached them where they lay, it made them angry.

"You are not so much cleverer than we are," cried one of the trio, emerging from behind the door, "though you have been hired by the barbarians to come here and revile us. We can write and reckon on the abacus, we know how to judge silver and speak mandarin—can you do these things?"

Without waiting for an answer, the fellow continued:

"You think we are ignorant folk, and that no doubt is why you have read these words just now to shame us, but I for one will not be taught by you."

Then, snatching the New Testament from Mao's hands, he began to read aloud from it. The bystanders listened to the poor proud 'opium devil,' who read fluently enough to justify his boast. Presently, with the fairness which often shows itself in a Chinese crowd, they turned upon the beggar and said:

"What you are reading is good enough, why should you be annoyed by such excellent teaching?"

Mao tried once more to speak to the beggars, but one of them interrupted him, crying out: "We are as bad as bad can be. Your teaching is of no use to us. Go and talk elsewhere, or we will beat you."

Rain was falling, and by this time nearly a hundred people had taken shelter in the great porch of the temple. They praised Mao's message and the self-control which he had shown when talking to the beggars. Then they asked for copies of the book from which he had just been reading to them, and before long the companions had sold the New Testaments which they had brought with them and left the temple in search of a fresh audience.

A long walk brought them to Behind Dividing Wall Street. Rain was still falling, and, as they passed along the pavement, an old woman, whom they afterwards knew as Ch'i Shen, came out and invited them to rest at her house and talk to her about the Christian teaching, until the shower ceased. Mao sat down and began to read to her: "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren. The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity. Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home and to respect their parents; for that is good and acceptable before God."¹

The old woman and her neighbours were delighted with this teaching.

"If we worship the 'Supreme Ruler,'" said she, "shall we be able to live like that?"

¹ 1 Timothy v. 1-4.

Mao told her in simple language the story of God's love.

"But we worship the 'Supreme Ruler' in our temple," said she; "he has a beard and carries a sceptre in his hands. We burn paper money before him on his birthday."

"The 'Supreme Ruler' of whom I tell you is not an idol, but the God of heaven."

"How can there be a 'Supreme Ruler' other than the one we serve?" queried Ch'i Shen.

"The idol in your temple was a man, who was given the title 'Supreme Ruler of the Empyrean,' by an emperor of the Sung Dynasty. The Spirit of whom we tell you, is our Father above. He has not a birthday like a man, for He is eternal, without beginning or end, and He saves men."

"Why should He save men?" asked the old woman.

"Because they are sinful and in danger of being lost."

"Sinful! What does that mean?"

Mao showed her how covetousness, lying, evil-speaking, idolatry, lust, murder were sins which ruined men's souls, but that God had sent His Son to save them from such guilt and its consequences.

"I made away with three of my girl babies, one after the other, as they were born—was it sinful to do that?"

"Yes, God cannot forgive such sin unless you repent and seek the Saviour."

"But they were not other people's children, they were my own, to do just what I pleased with."

"As the proverb has it, 'The tigress, though cruel, will not eat her cubs,'" said Mao. "The fact that the babies were your own only made your sin the worse."

"What is to be done?" said the old woman. "I cannot bring the babies back again."

"Ask God to forgive you, He will change your heart and take away your sin."

"Where must I go to worship God?"

"Go to Ying's shop in South Street tomorrow, he will show you the church."

"Will God really save me from my sin?"

"Yes, God the Father can save you, our Lord Jesus can save you, the Holy Spirit can save you."

From that day Ch'i Shen worshipped God, winning the respect of the other Christians, as well by her consistent life, as by her courage in facing the mockery of the city people, when she walked to church on Sundays.

Two years later, when being questioned among other candidates for baptism, she said:

"I am a dull old woman, but I know that I am a sinner and that the Father can save me, our Lord Jesus can save me, the Holy Spirit

can save me ; more than this I do not understand."

Nothing further could be drawn from her by questioning, but her life spoke for her and so she was baptized.

A year later she told her friend Mr. Ying that she wished to give her savings, a sum of eighty dollars, to the church. He thanked her for the offered gift, but, after consulting with his fellow-worshippers, advised her to leave the money to her own relatives, who might need it when arranging for her funeral by and by.

Ten days later it pleased God to take her to Himself in the eighty-sixth year of her age. One who was in the room at the time, said: "She was good to look upon, as she lay with calm face and folded hands waiting the Master's call." When the end came she prayed aloud, "Father, save me, Lord Jesus, save me, Holy Spirit, save me." The lips ceased moving, and with a smile upon the face "that was so good to look upon," she entered the glory land.

CHAPTER XIV

THE QUEST

"I love some men with a strange unsatisfied affection. All my thoughts about them I am gradually learning to resolve into prayers for them."—FORBES ROBINSON.

THE desire to help others, so characteristic of Cheng Mao, showed itself most strongly at home. His affection for Tu in particular, selfless, sagacious, patient, deepening at length into a consuming passion for the restoration of that wayward brother, is the love story of his life. Lying as it does at the centre of many interests, it shows more clearly than any of the others, the red blood of human feeling pulsing beneath an undemonstrative exterior. He loved men and women in Christ Jesus, but his love for Tu was mother's and brother's and lover's love as well. As we follow its vicissitudes, we learn from its disappointments and final consummation, how truly the seed of his life was "lost in the glory of its own harvest."

Meantime there was need of patience. Naturally amiable, when not under the in-

fluence of drink and bad companions, Tu, who was now employed at a Mr. Ch'uan's shoe shop, defied all his brother's efforts to control his follies. One day, after consuming a liberal allowance of spirits, he became helplessly drunk, when his fellow-workmen, taking advantage of the bemused condition to which he had reduced himself, daubed his face with ink as he lay upon the floor, "blackening it until he was as grim as an idol prince."¹

Mao, who was in the city at the time, happening to enter the shop, found his brother in this state. The shock was tremendous.

"Get up, Tu, I wish to talk to you," said he, as soon as he could trust himself to speak.

Tu lifted his blackened face and mumbled a few foolish words, as he tried to make out who his visitor could be. Mao's eyes fell before that maudlin glance, and when at last he found words to utter, he said:

"Tu-ah,² you are indeed in black darkness."

The name Pai-liao, meaning a hundred ends, which the young spendthrift, half jesting, half in earnest, had bestowed upon himself, in imitation of his brothers' book names, gave rise to a bitter witticism on the part of the lad's uncle. Playing on the meaning of the words one day, the old gentleman, who had been

¹ "The prince" idols often have diabolical black faces.

² Particle sometimes placed after names in familiar address.

greatly annoyed by his nephew's drunken extravagances, burst out :

“ A hundred ends, a hundred ends,
For love of drink and play ;
You play and drink and fritter now
Our little all away.”

In China, where everything is known by everyone, the scapegrace's doings became so notorious that someone made a doggerel verse from the literary designations of the three brothers, assuming the title with which Tu in mockery had dubbed himself as one of them :

“ ‘ A hundred humilities ’
Is humble all,
‘ A hundred forbearances ’
In all forbears.
‘ A hundred expenditures ’
Alas ! spends all.”

Not long after the old Secretary's incisive outburst, a crony asked Tu to repay a gambling debt, long overdue. The spendthrift's pockets were empty, but like the sportsman he was, he offered to play double or quits. On losing this fresh throw, he stripped off his clothes, all but a pair of cotton trousers, and gave the bundle to his creditor.

On hearing of what had happened, Mao spent the whole of the following night in prayer, and when morning came went to redeem the things,

then took them to his heedless brother. Tu, softened a little by such kindness, promised to reform, rashly protesting that, so long as he lived, he would not touch another card.

The promise, made so stoutly, was soon broken and the gambler again in trouble. After this fresh relapse, Mao sent Chhieh-gi to persuade him to come and have a talk at his quarters, near the church. The young fellow, who had already received more exhortation than he had any relish for, refused to obey the summons, but finally yielded and went.

When they left the house, Tu, as the younger man, fell back to walk behind his elder, but Chhieh-gi, fearing lest he might dodge round a street corner, or disappear into some crony's shop, told him not to stand upon ceremony, but to go first and he would follow. Divining the meaning of this manoeuvre, the delinquent resolved to be revenged upon his monitor, for doubting him in such fashion. And, not without a grim sense of humour, led the way over waste ground and heaps of tiles, through pools of water and miry places, where thorns struggled among grasses damp with dew, until at length, leaving the mound beside the city granary, he passed through the yamen into the streets. Chhieh-gi, who dared not fall behind his nimble charge for a moment, had to follow

as best he could, until his shoes were muddy and his trousers soaked by dirty water.

Finding that little good had come of this attempt, Mao sent his disciple Ch'en Mei to remonstrate with his brother. The second envoy went to Lowfield Pond very early in the morning, to make sure of finding his quarry. Tu, who was just dressed, received him civilly, and gave him a cup of tea, then, excusing himself for an instant, escaped by the back door of the house, leaving Mei to digest the good advice, so carefully prepared for his benefit.

These and many other such-like disappointments were discouraging enough. Mao was passing through deep waters. His uncle and elder brother seemed little nearer to the truth than of old. Tu roamed the streets as if he had never promised to amend. So far, apparently, his efforts had failed altogether; he had to acknowledge with deepening grief that the spendthrift was beyond the power of human rescue.

CHAPTER XV

“JUST LIKE A BEGGAR”

“This is the strength and blood to virtue to condemn things that be desired and to neglect that which is feared.”—BACON.

MAO's influence, unassuming as he was, became increasingly felt, as well by the general public as by those who knew him. His words had weight.

Once, when preaching in the street, he was much hampered by a man who repeatedly interrupted what he was saying by outbursts of bad language.

“My brother,” said he, pausing for a moment in his discourse, “you eat rice with your mouth, you eat fish and other food with your mouth, why should you pass filth from your mouth?”

The man staggered as if the quiet voice had struck him a blow, and remained silent during the rest of the address.

Even the heathen, although they taunted him with his failure to reform the unrepentant Tu, seemed to feel the power of this lowly life. Upon some lips expressions of approval took the place of

unkind speeches. There were people in the city who said, "Mao is a friendly fellow, he has a nod and a word for all. To meet him once is to know him always."

The Christians at the South Street Church soon discovered that their new deacon was no ordinary deacon, but one who, whilst truly spiritual, showed an intimate acquaintance with their individual circumstances, which he made use of in a most direct and practical manner.

For instance, one of their number, who had fallen into a habit of drinking hot spirits before going to bed at night, was somewhat surprised when Mao, approaching the matter in a very considerate and tactful manner, urged him to abandon the practice.

"Give up your whisky," said he. "After taking strong drink a man cannot be trusted to bar the front door, nor to care, as he ought to care, for his home and property. He forgets to have evening worship with his family; all that he can do is to roll into bed, where he falls asleep without a prayer."

After the interview the man who had received this exhortation said to a friend: "His words whilst simple enough were almost irresistible, and even when my lips were in the act of answering his arguments, my heart had to acknowledge that he was right. I must give up my shamshu."

Sometimes Mao influenced people more by

what he did not say, than by what he said. One day when discussing some matter with him, his first instructor in the faith, Ch'i, whose stolid demeanour overlaid an excitable temperament, was carried away by his feelings, and argued very hotly. Mao listened for a time, till an appropriate moment seeming to have arrived, was about to say something, when Ch'i raised his hand, and, employing a phrase which, strangely enough, may be used in conversation without offence, said, “You be quiet. Let me speak first.”

Mao bowed his head and answered gently, “All right, I can talk afterwards.” The quiet look, even more than the gentle answer, struck his friend, who, twenty years later, spoke of the words and the unintended reproof which they carried with them.

Another adherent of the church, a man more difficult in disposition than the old shoemaker, was Uncle River, nicknamed Rottenhead from a disease of the scalp, which gave his head a curious mouldy appearance. He was an irritable and at times ‘rough-mouthed’ man. One morning this individual, noticing Mao’s worn clothes, exclaimed:

“You go dressed like a beggar, just like a beggar.”

“Never mind, never mind,” said Mao, in falling deprecatory tones, which soothed his

assailant's wrath. His friends, however, had to admit that the new deacon was careless about his outer man. His calico stockings were often torn, showing through the uppers of his shoes, which opened behind "like fishes' tails," and he wore his hats until the paper backing peeped through the greasy satin.

Like Uncle River, the people in the street taunted him for dressing shabbily. One winter day, when preaching to a group of them in the city, he spoke of the blessedness of serving God.

"You have only two old jackets upon your back in this 'ten-coat weather,'"¹ cried a man in the crowd, "and one of them is torn. What blessing have you got from serving God?"

"You do not understand," he answered. "If your eyes were but opened, you would see that I am loaded with benefits. You think that I am poor, but I am rich. By and by I shall wear beautiful shining clothes, when I go to live with God in the heavenly city."

But those who knew him best say, that he was selfless rather than careless in the matter of dress. If he went shabbily, it was because his money had been spent in clothing others. He was no ascetic, yet in the calling on which he had entered, like St. Francis he fulfilled, however unconsciously, the ascetic ideal of poverty,

¹ Winter time.

chastity, and divine obedience—“the three members of the spiritual cross which must be raised upon the fourth, humility.”¹ Love constrained him. This is the key to what he was and did, and apart from this we cannot understand the man, we cannot estimate even such a detail of his life as the dress which he wore.

One night, not long after his onslaught upon Mao's shabby clothes, when Uncle River and some of the other Christians, who, feeling the safety and comfort of numbers, used to go to and from evening prayer together, were walking through the city, their little brass lanterns casting dim lights upon the pavement, a member of the band, taken with a fit of “searching for chinks and crevices” in his neighbours' reputations, remarked :

“How can Brother² Mao be the kind of man that people say he is, so free from faults, so different from others?”

“Look at the ill-usage and persecution which he bears with in the streets,” said another.

“He stands what seven or eight of us together could not endure,” exclaimed a third.

Then they discussed whether K'oo Shu, another well-known Chuanchow Christian, or Mao were the better man, some voting for the

¹ St. Francis de Sales.

² The ordinary word used in speaking of a man of one's own age and rank.

one, some for the other. The unconscious tribute thus paid by these people, to one so far behind them in opportunity, is none the less remarkable because of the peculiar setting in which we find it. Men of greater Christian experience than these children in the faith saw the growing beauty of Mao's life. Some years later Mr. Ch'en Hsüan-ling, the first ordained minister of the South Street Church, who knew him better, perhaps, than any other of his contemporaries, said, "I looked upon him as in many ways a lesser St. Paul—our little St. Paul."

CHAPTER XVI

THE WOMAN WHICH WAS A SINNER

“ St. Francis began to speak of God so sweetly, so sublimely, and so wondrously, that the fulness of Divine Grace came down on them and they were all rapt in God.”

FIGURETTI. Translated by W. T. Arnold.

MAO'S work carried him over a widening area of country, as he pushed on from the city and its surrounding villages, to spread the gospel through valleys sown with red farmsteads, to market towns upon the busy roads and hamlets in the mountains.

One of these expeditions brought him to Hsien-Yüan, a couple of twisted streets, set between the Anki River and hill flanks which fall to the water's edge. Centuries ago, when Chu-Hsi visited the place, the peach trees of a pleasant orchard hung their branches over the bank, and the reflection of the sun-lit blossoms falling in 'red fire' upon the river, starred the shadowy presentment of the encircling mountains upon its magic mirror. The scholar statesman, charmed by the scene, named it Hsien-Yüan, the

“Garden of the Immortals,” a name which it has retained until the present day.

One Sunday afternoon, whilst Mao was preaching at Hsien-Yüan, several women entered the hovel which at that time served there as a village church. Among them was a poor waif named Ch'ien Niang, who had gone to the place half hoping to find something to eat. Her husband, an impecunious opium smoker, had disposed of her to another man for twenty dollars, and, with the money raised by this infamous transaction, had gone abroad, leaving the poor creature in misery. Time slipped away, the husband did not return. The man with whom the woman had been left died, and his family turned her into the street. Her own relatives either could not, or would not help her, and, having neither home nor livelihood, she fell into a life of shame.

Something in the word spoken, something about the man who spoke it, touched Ch'ien Niang's heart; so, when the service was at an end, she waited, wishing to enquire further about the worship of the ‘Supreme Ruler,’ of whom she had just been hearing.

In the meantime, one of the bystanders took the preacher by the sleeve and advised him to be careful, for the woman was of bad character. Ch'ien Niang, guessing the whisperer's intention, had already risen to leave, when Mao went up to her and said in his slow, gentle way :

“Whenever you see the door open and other people inside this place, you may come again, and I will gladly tell you more about God.”

The words, simple as they were, drew a shelter round her, the forehead, which she had steeled to meet the bystanders, drooped, and she stepped aside.

On the following Sunday Mao told Ch'ien Niang about the woman who had had five husbands and how the Lord had changed her heart, so that she brought many of her neighbours to hear Him, and then assured the poor creature that the Saviour could do the same for her.

“Teacher,” she said, “you look upon me as wicked, as one who scarcely ought to come inside this place. Where then am I to go to worship God?”

“Our Lord told the woman that ‘neither in this mountain’—that was the place where she lived—‘nor yet at Jerusalem’—that was a famous city far away—‘shall ye worship the Father.’ People everywhere may worship God. ‘God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth,’” said Mao.

Ch'ien Niang sighed deeply.

Then he told her of the woman who, long ago, was seized by men who wished to punish her misdeeds with death, and how, on the way to judgment, they brought her to our Lord Jesus.

“What did He do?” asked Ch'ien Niang.

“Listen, I will read you what the Master said to them.” Then he read: “‘He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.’”

“There may be hope for me then,” said Ch’ien Niang, a new longing trembling in her face. “I yet may look for a day when I shall be saved from this life of shame.”

From that time she became a regular attendant at the humble church, going in accordance with her teacher’s instructions, whenever the door was thrown open and there were other people present. The love of God met her need, and the life into which she had fallen, slain by a pardoning word of the Redeemer, passed away. Her former associates tried to drag her back, but she continued in the path which she had chosen, and supported herself by washing clothes for the village inns. Afterwards she went south to

Changchow, when Mao lost touch with her, but there is reason to believe that she remained faithful to that Lord, who spoke to her through His servant in the humble church beside the river at Hsien-Yüan.

CHAPTER XVII

‘THE GOSPEL BOAT’

“Waft, waft ye winds His story ;
And you, ye waters roll.”

MAO now spent a good deal of time in the villages, upon the shores of the tree-fringed Chuanchow River.¹ With his companion he cooked, ate, slept, and if need be found refuge, in a boat prepared by Dr. Grant² for this purpose. Whenever there was an opportunity for preaching the gospel, they anchored by the bank for a day or two.

A main centre of operations was at Brook-end, where Christianity had already taken some hold. At a village belonging to the Chao family, some eight li from this place, he came upon a woman making ‘cup cakes’ for ancestral worship.

“Why use cakes to reverence your ancestors?” he enquired.

“Without such things how could we please them? Would they be contented with the empty

¹ Called the Anki River further up.

² At that time in charge of the Chuanchow district.

service of mere lip worship?” answered the woman.

“True reverence is of the heart,” said Mao. “When brothers love one another they reverence their parents; when wives and daughters honour their superiors and care for the family they reverence the ancestors.”

“When we bring offerings, the spirits of the departed are pleased and come near to us. Is it not so?” asked the woman.

“But the dead do not return to earth, although old women say they do, in order to make gain by deceiving folk.”

“If one’s parents desire one to reverence the ancestors in the usual way, ought one to go against their wishes?” persisted the woman.

“Our family superiors are not superior to God,” said Mao. “If you only knew how to tell them about Him, they would change their minds.”

Whilst Mao was drinking some tea, which the woman had prepared for him in her sitting-room, her son came into the house and attacked him with some heat.

“Don’t listen to this man,” said he to his mother, “he reverences neither the five relationships nor the ancestors. Send him away at once.”

At this moment a boy, sent by his master, a Mr. Wang, from the house next door, looked

in to see what was happening, and returned almost immediately with a message from the scholar, inviting the stranger to go to his study.

Mr. Wang, who proved to be a man of culture, received Mao with courtesy, and on hearing that he was a preacher of the gospel, said to him :

“ I hear that my neighbour’s son spoke rudely to you just now ; are you not very angry with him ? ”

“ He is but a lad,” said Mao, “ and did not understand my visit. One ought to make allowance for mistaken zeal.”

“ I will send for him,” said Mr. Wang.

When the boy came into the room, his master reproved him sharply, saying :

“ Is it in accordance with the ancient teaching that educated people should rail at strangers ? Suppose this gentleman had struck you for your insolence, what then ? You acted as you did because you trusted to my prestige in this place, and you did wrong. In future you must be more careful how you speak to your elders.”

Seeing the lad’s face redden with shame, Mao interposed in his behalf, and with a few kindly words assured him that he bore him no grudge for what had happened.

After the boy had left the room, Mr. Wang remarked to his visitor : “ People say that your

religion is all wrong, and indeed it is difficult to see how it can be a good one, since it was begun by a virgin's bringing forth a son."

"“Heaven commissioned the swallow to descend and give birth to Shang,”¹ said Mao, quoting the Book of Poetry, to show that the idea of a miraculous birth was not unknown in ancient China.

Mr. Wang nodded his head, but said nothing.

"Does not the same book also tell of another maiden who brought forth a child? ‘She trod upon a toe print made by God . . . she dwelt retired. She gave birth to and nourished a son.’”²

"Such things happened long ago. The classics tell us true," said the scholar.

Then Mao opened his Bible and read the story of how Mary, the village maiden, immaculately became a mother, commenting upon it as he went along.

"Had I but known this teaching earlier," ejaculated Mr. Wang, "I would have kept school near some church, where I might have learned to serve God."

Mao told him how the Saviour grew to manhood, and finally died to save men from their sins.

"Sins," cried Mr. Wang, catching at the

¹ *Shi King*, Pt. IV, Book III, ode 3. Legge's translation.

² *Shi King*, Pt. III, Book II, ode 1.

word. "Is there then a doctrine of sin and its forgiveness? What is sin?"

"Sin is offending against God or man. All wrongdoing is sin. Our mouths have said wrong things, our hearts have thought evil thoughts, our hands and feet have done amiss. 'If a man has sinned against heaven, there is no one to whom he can pray.'"¹

"But what is heaven?"

"Does not the character itself tell us? A stroke for one, placed over 'ta' great. Heaven, in such a passage as this, is not the shining sky, but the Great One over all—God Himself."²

"How then can we ask the Heaven God, against whom we have sinned, to forgive us?" said Mr. Wang, greatly moved.

"We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth His will, him He heareth," said Mao, quoting from the Book which he held in his hand. Then he explained more fully the way of access to the Father, opened for sinners by the work of Christ.

Mr. Wang was so much interested by this interview, that it was only after repeatedly promising to return, that Mao at last was able to leave the house.

Another expedition from Brookend, which

¹ *Analects*, III, 13. Legge.

² But see also the explanation given in Giles' *Religions of China*

was to bring forth abiding fruit, was one paid to Big Stone village, on the opposite side of the river. There, under the shade of a great tree, the colporteur evangelist preached to the people, with the result that one of their number, a stalwart farmer named Ch'ên Ch'uan, was brought to know God. This man, who had taken an active part in the notorious highway robberies of the village, brought three of his brothers to church at Brook-end on the following Sunday, but next week he appeared alone, saying that Christianity had been tabooed by the authorities at Big Stone.

Mao went back with him to the village, and, after a great discussion with Ch'ên Ch'uan's granduncle, who threatened to have his grandnephew buried alive, spoke to the people on the parable of the sower. God helped His servant, whose message that day was accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost. A crowd gathered under the spreading banyan, and so interested were the people by the discourse, that they broke into exclamations of approval and clapped their hands.

After this Ch'ên Ch'uan and his granduncle went regularly to church.

Half a year later, when holding a service with the villagers, Mao spoke of the peace which God gives to His people.

"What is peace?" queried an old man, looking wearily at the speaker.

"You tell him," said Mao, turning to Ch'ên Ch'uan.

The new recruit stood up under the big tree, and in his blunt, downright way, said :

"During the six months in which I have worshipped God, I have been delivered from opium, from gambling, and from idol-worship. The Saviour has helped me to govern my bad temper, and my heart has been at peace."

"Tell this friend whether you have found peace or not," said Mao, calling on Ch'ên Ch'uan's granduncle.

"I am but a learner, and have only now begun to pray," said this once bitter enemy of the gospel; "but already there is a difference in my life. One has peace in serving God."

In time seven of the Big Stone people became Christians, and not long after, as we shall see, Ch'ên Ch'uan, at the risk of his life, struck a manful blow at the superstitions of the Yingnei district, and so helped to prepare a way for the entrance of the gospel to that place.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NARROW GATE

"He had in his pocket a map of all ways leading to or from the Celestial City."—JOHN BUNYAN.

IN the summer of 1883, when passing through Ts'an-nei, a village not far from Hsien-Yüan, Mao noticed the words, "Enter ye in at the strait gate," above the doorway of a large house. A local custom allows one to 'invite instruction' from any scholar; so Mao, eager to take advantage of every opportunity which brought him into contact with the people, and surmising that in all probability the house belonged to a literary man, went to the front door and said that he wished to ask the master of the house about the inscription put up over the lintel. Being kindly received by the owner, who proved to be a salaried graduate, named Yeh, he asked him about the words.

"I noticed them above a doorway, at the end of a narrow passage in Chuanchow city," said Mr. Yeh, "and they reminded me of how Confucius exhorts us to enter the narrow gate of virtue. I was busy at the time, and, knowing that the

passage led to the 'Jesus Church,' was not at all anxious to go inside, where there might be barbarians present, who would not understand the meaning of my visit. Now I am fortunate in having the company of one, who doubtless can explain the meaning of the phrase more fully to me."

"The narrow way is the way of life, the broad way is the way of sin and death," said Mao.

"How do you know?"

"This book tells us so," continued Mao, taking out his Bible; and then he read: "'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it.'"

Mr. Yeh struck his hands together and said: "This indeed is good teaching. When next I am at Hsien-Yüan, I shall go and have another talk with you about it."

"You will be certain to find me on the seventeenth of the moon, for that is 'worship day,'" said Mao.

Mr. Yeh went on the day arranged, and continued to attend church until he left for the

Literary Chancellor's examinations in the city. When in Chuanchow, he overcame his prejudices and saw a good deal of the Christians there, whom he invited to go and preach the gospel in his native place, saying repeatedly :

“When will you open ‘a worship hall’ for our Yeh family of the Ts’an-nei village?”

Mr. Yeh, who continued to worship at Hsien-Yüan for three and a half years, was much interested by the rite of baptism.

“The water suggests the cleansing of the heart,” said he. “It is a fitting sign—when sufficiently instructed I shall be baptized.”

On next visiting the city, he showed considerable acquaintance with the Bible and was more interested in baptism than ever, advocating that people ought to be baptized on first going to church, to help them to repent and to be pure; as were the Jews who gathered to the call of John the Baptist.

A man who followed his own ideas in his own way, he had resolved to worship God with his whole heart whenever a church was opened at Ts’an-nei. As the story progresses we shall hear more of him.

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE TOILS

“ Ill that He blesses is our good,
And unblessed good is ill,
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will.”—F. W. FABER.

TROUBLE at home called Mao away from his work among the outlying villages for a time. Pai-ch'ien, who showed little real sympathy as yet with his aims, had been annoyed by the fact that he showed no inclination to marry and settle down, like other people. Having fifty dollars of Mao's in his hands, the idea struck him that, by means of this money, he could so arrange matters that his brother would practically be compelled to take a wife. So, in the autumn of 1883, relying upon his authority as elder brother, he planned a match for A Mao, paying fifty dollars to the parents of the bride-elect, as 'earnest money' to clench the bargain. This he did, hoping no doubt that when he found the engagement made and his money spent, Mao, ever gentle of disposition, would yield to the force of

circumstances and accept the marriage as inevitable.

But, when Mao found that he had been engaged in this way to a heathen woman, without his knowledge or consent, he was greatly distressed. After a night spent in prayer, he went to the city and told his brother that the bargain, so unfairly made, must be broken. Pai-ch'ien tried to change his mind, but he met all his arguments by stating that he intended to remain single. Now, at the outset of his career as colporteur, he had said to one of the Chuanchow Christians, that he would not marry so as to be free to work, adding that if Tu repented, he would arrange a marriage for him, so that his children might carry on the family.

In spite of all reproaches, and in face of the fact that his relatives refused to aid in cancelling the match, Mao adhered to his decision. Finding that no one would act for him in the matter,¹ he went to the girl's parents, and, after a year's negotiations, persuaded them to break off the engagement. He had to give them a written promise, sealed with the impression of his thumb,—a contract of the most binding character,—renouncing all right to their daughter's hand in future.

¹ According to the usual etiquette the difficulty should have been settled through a third party. Mao's action required a moral courage not easily estimated by the Western mind.

In the settlement of this matter the Lord answered prayer beyond all expectation, for the girl's parents were so convinced of Mao's purity of intention, that, heathen though they were, they returned to his brother the fifty dollars, paid to them as part of the bride price.

In after days Mao's friends repeatedly advised him to marry some Christian girl, who would care for his health and keep him from overwork. To one of these kindly advisers he said:

"The arguments with which I declined to marry are still in my memory, how can I swallow my own words? Marriage would hamper the freedom with which, situated as I now am, I can preach the gospel. The woman might not be likeminded with myself. Our children, if we had any, might be disobedient, or sickly. Better remain unwed, so that in the coming years I may give all my strength to God's service."

After discussing the matter until midnight, he remained as fixed as ever in his purpose.

To another he said: "You must not tempt me from the path of duty."

When the news of the broken engagement reached the place where Mao was then working, the heathen made capital of it, calling after him in the street, "Big-headed Mao, who sold his wife," and adding, "You will leave nobody behind you when you die."

Later, when one of his missionary friends offered to defray wedding expenses, should ever he change his mind, Mao still refused, preferring to give himself entirely to his work.

CHAPTER XX

‘HIS EXCELLENCY GOLD’

“By the love He stood alone in,
His sole Godhead rose complete,
And the false gods fell down moaning,
Each from off his golden seat.”—E. B. BROWNING.

IN 1885 Mao made a journey to the north-west of Chuanchow, which opened the populous centre of Yingnei to the gospel. The people who live in that fertile valley, pride themselves on a long line of ancestors who have served the State, their chief family hero being an official, who, for bringing Southern China under the sway of the Manchu Dynasty, was honoured with the posthumous title of “Founder of the Empire.” This family pride, combined with the caste feeling of the scholars who form a considerable proportion of the district’s inhabitants, made it peculiarly difficult for Christianity to gain a foothold within the place.

Some idea of the spiritual condition of Yingnei, where Mao was to spend the best years of his ministry, may be gathered from an experi-

ence, which, a short time before he began work there, befell his disciple Ch'ên Ch'uan, from Big Stone village. Ch'uan, who had gone to Yingnei to buy some malt, spent the night with a friend near the market-place. After supper he sat with his host for a short time, listening to the local gossips discussing the news of the place. Presently the conversation turned upon a kind of gambling, known as "the princely man's hazard," in which the players back the names of ancient worthies and draw for the winning number.

"'His Excellency Gold'¹ indicates the successful name every time he is consulted," said a spirit medium named Kindheart, referring to an 'idol prince' much venerated in the district.

"It only tells them by chance, it can't pick the right number any more than you or I can. If it really were indwelt by a good spirit, it would have nothing to do with a game, so strictly forbidden by the law as 'the princely man's hazard,'" said Ch'uan, in his jolly voice.

"Do you say that 'His Excellency Gold' has no spirit?" cried Kindheart, growing warm in the debate. "Just you poke your finger into his mouth and see."

"It is but a gilded wooden image," said Ch'uan. "If I were to shove my finger into

¹ One of the "idol princes" worshipped in the district, supposed to be a fierce idol given to seizing people.

its mouth, it could not even turn away its head, or say a single word to hinder me. You should not worship such a stock, but serve the living and true God."

Kindheart, seriously concerned for the reputation of the object of his devotions, dared Ch'uan to prove his assertions, saying:

"If you will push your finger into his mouth, I will give you 500 cash, to buy pig's feet for supper."

"Never mind the money," said Ch'uan, "but if I put my finger into the idol's mouth, you Yingnei people must undertake that you will not beat me for doing so."

Kindheart, who was now furiously angry, left the room, and before very long returned with the idol, which he placed upon the table.

News of the challenge given and accepted had spread, and people began to gather, expecting to see the Christian struck dead by the famous "Gold big man." In the meantime, Kindheart had arranged the table to his liking, placing sticks of burning incense, paper money, and the 500 cash before the image. Then he bowed at the idol's feet, and with many reverent gestures informed it, that a man had come into the place who despised the ancient customs and said that it had no spirit.

"Now come and put your finger in his mouth, if you dare," said he, turning to Ch'uan.

Seeing how serious a turn the affair had taken, the solitary champion of Christianity appealed to the people once more, saying :

“I am but one among many ; if the ‘idol prince ’ ‘seizes ’ me, good and well, but you men of Yingnei must promise that you will not beat me, if I do what I have been challenged to do.”

An assurance that he would not be beaten having been given him, the Christian approached the table. There was a sudden quiet, the eyes of the people in the densely packed room being fixed on the gilded idol and the man who, in their opinion, was rushing to certain destruction. Ch‘uan looked at the crowd, then he stretched out his hand and thrust vigorously with the middle finger at the mouth of the image. “His Excellency ” toppled in his gilded chair, then fell with a crash. There was a pause, but nothing happened, the idol lying upon its back where it had fallen. Ch‘uan opened his mouth and was about to say something, when Kind-heart, who had managed to free his arm from the press sufficiently to swing his heavy bamboo pipe, struck him on the forehead, and he fell half stunned to the ground.

The room, which had been so still, now surged with excitement. “Strike him, beat him to death,” cried the idol’s followers, as they tried to pommel him with their fists. Happily

they pressed so close to one another that they had little room to hit the object of their spite. Then they dragged him out of the house, and would soon have finished their work, had not someone said :

“Keep him till to-morrow, when the town will be full of visitors, then we can thrash him within an inch of his life and peg him out in the market-place, for everyone to spit on.”

At this juncture, one of the chief men of the place arriving upon the scene, Chu'an's host appealed to him to protect his guest.

“Think of what you are doing,” said the newcomer to the villagers. “If you kill this man, you will involve us in a feud with the fighting Ch'êns of Big Stone village. Kind-heart and his friends are in the wrong. They dared the man to insult the idol, offering him money to do so.”

On this a dispute arose, which split the crowd into two factions, and would have run high, had not the medium suddenly begun to tremble and jump, pretending that the spirit of “His Excellency Gold” himself had come upon him, and was about to speak through his lips. A sudden ring opened round him, and Ch'uan, half dazed as he was, cast himself in earnest prayer upon God, knowing that his life depended on the words which were about to fall from the man's mouth.

“Do not beat him, my children,” muttered the pretended spirit of the idol in a thin, unnatural voice. “Five years more, and I will destroy his family root and branch.”

Ch‘uan’s heart bounded with hope at the words. God had answered his prayer, and for the moment his life was safe.

Another second, and his friend the maltster hurried him off to his shop, where he hid him until midnight, and long before dawn he had crossed the Sheepskin Pass and was making his way homewards to Big Stone village.

The Yingnei people, indignant with their favourite idol, for the slight which he had allowed to be put upon himself, scraped the gilt from its face and had the surface entirely renewed. When, five years later, they learned that Ch‘uan’s family, far from being destroyed, had increased from four to eight, their superstitions received a further blow.

III

CHURCH BUILDING

CHAPTER XXI

BREAKING FRESH GROUND

“ Yet not in solitude if Christ anear me
Waketh him workers for the great employ.
Oh not in solitude, if souls that hear me
Catch from my joyaunce the surprise of joy.”

S. Paul, F. W. H. MYERS.

OF the planting of the Church at Yingnei, where Ch'uan so nearly lost his life, Mao has left a brief narrative, which begins as follows :

“ In the fifth moon of the eleventh year of the Emperor Kwangsu, Dr. David Grant sent Fêng-ming, T'a, Chhieh-gi and myself on an expedition to sell books and preach the gospel. When setting out, he told us to pass the Sunday at any village where we met with encouragement, in the hope that afterwards it might be possible to open a station there. Leaving Chuanchow on the 12th, we kept Sunday the 15th at East-field Bridge. The weather being hot, the others went home, leaving Chhieh-gi and myself to continue the expedition. On the 21st we reached Yingnei.”

At Eastfield Bridge the explorers had heard, that in Yingnei there was a business man named Hung-chu, who was not unfriendly to Christianity. As it chanced, or rather was ordered by the Divine Providence, this man, whom they met with sooner than they expected, was the means of rescuing them from the difficult situation, in which they found themselves almost immediately after reaching their destination.

Hung-chu thus describes what happened :

“ One day in 1885, Mao and his companion arrived at Yingnei and began preaching in the market-place. They had scarce commenced, when some shopkeepers raised a dispute with them. The countryfolk in the market joined in the discussion, and presently one or two scholars incited the idlers of the place to drive the strangers out of the town. Just then I happened to pass through the market on my way to business, and noticed that something unusual was happening.

“ A man told me that the people were ill-treating two Christian teachers from the city. On this I pushed my way into the midst of the crowd, calling out, ‘Don’t be rude to these strangers. Though their teaching is unknown in our town, it is well known all over the world, and has done much good elsewhere. It is right and true.’

“ ‘How can it be right and true?’ questioned a voice from the crowd.

“‘The God of whom the teachers speak came from heaven, to save men and make them good,’ said I.

“‘But the spirits do not come down from heaven to earth,’ objected a scholar, standing near.

“‘Do not the Analects say, “Pray and beseech the spirits above and beneath”?’¹ I answered, quoting from the books.

“The scholar caught the allusion, and admitted that if there were spirits beneath it was evident that they did descend, and in the course of the argument which followed, he agreed that it was fitting that a Saviour should come to earth from heaven.

“Gradually the excitement lessened, when the crowd being somewhat pacified, it was agreed that I should take the strangers home with me, and as far as possible protect them from further annoyance. I took them to my quarters, and though one of my partners, as well as the assistants, at first objected to tea being made for them, we kept Mao and his companions with us for ten days, whilst they preached in the surrounding villages and searched the town for some place suitable for the purposes of a church.

“Our visitors failing to secure the accommodation they required, I rented a place on their

¹ Analects, II.

behalf from one of my friends, but when he discovered that his shop had been engaged for use as a 'worship hall,' he wished to break the bargain; fearing that 'the barbarians' might get him into trouble with the neighbours by making an improper use of the building. After some talk, I persuaded him to keep to his contract, promising to be responsible for any consequences which might arise from his having let property to the church.

"Mao, who had now been joined by an ex-Taoist priest named Ch'en, preached regularly to the people. Finding, however, that he suffered a good deal of annoyance, I used to go and sit with him and his friend in the evening, after business hours, to encourage them as much as I could."

We gather from this and from other suggestions, that there was a good deal of opposition to Christianity in Yingnei at the time, and not long afterwards we find that the pioneers, together with Dr. Grant, who was visiting them, were stoned in the streets.

Hung-chu continues:

"Mao went about Bible in hand, saying to everyone he met: 'This is God's Holy Book. Listen while I read some of it to you.'

"A few of the townsfolk would listen for a little, others again would dispute with the reader. Not knowing at that time much of

spiritual things myself, I did not sympathize with his methods, and remonstrated with him, saying :

“ ‘ When you read the Bible to these people they don’t understand, they are “just like ducklings listening to thunder.” ’ ”

“ The heathen teased me for helping the foreigners to propagate their heresies, in our town. One day, some of them said : ‘ Uncle Chu, Uncle Chu, your A Mao has been seized by an ‘idol prince’ and tied to the leg of the table in his temple. Why don’t you go and save him ? ’ ”

“ On another occasion the neighbours taunted me, saying : ‘ Your A Mao is sitting dead beneath a banyan tree, at the bottom of the Sheepskin Pass. We saw him as we came along the road this morning. Why don’t you go to look for him ? ’ I knew from their manner that what they said was not true, so I answered : ‘ If it has pleased God to take him to Himself, that is all right; but if God has not yet taken him to Himself, the preacher is very well able to come home by himself. I need not go to look for him. ’ ”

The quarters secured at Yingnei being now in use as a ‘ worship hall,’ Mao returned to the city, where he urged the Christians to provide for the rent and furnishing of the new station. After service, when he had spoken to them about

the matter, Tu's master, Ch'uan, one of the more prominent members of the congregation, rose and said :

"Since the foreigners have come so far to preach the gospel to us, it is only fair that we should do our best to pass it on to others. Let every one of us do what he can to help on the work at Yingnei." A collection was taken then and there, and the necessary funds being thus provided, Mao went back with a glad heart to his labours.

A few days later the local antagonism, which had been smouldering beneath the surface at Yingnei, bursting out afresh, a crowd of roughs, headed by some of the literati, went to the 'worship hall' and made a disturbance. The place was quickly filled by an excited rabble, and the preachers were in considerable danger. "You must leave our district," said the scholars. "We mean to put you out of the town and use your 'hall' to proclaim the doctrines of Confucius."

Threats, jeers, and abusive epithets rang through the air, rendering all attempts to reason with the people impossible, and it seemed as if the enemy were about to triumph. Seeing how matters stood, Mao, who had been much in prayer since the advent of the mischief-makers, advised his companion not to argue with them longer, but to lift his heart to God for aid. Their prayers were marvellously answered. The sight

of the silent figures with closed eyes and moving lips aroused the superstitious fears of the crowd, the clamour lessened, the people melted away as if by magic, and peace reigned once more in the little 'worship hall.'

CHAPTER XXII

‘BLACK CANNON’

“ ——— O call Thy wanderer home ;
To that dear home, safe in Thy wounded side,
Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may
hide.”

JOHN KEBLE.

A MONTH after regular preaching had begun at Yingnei, the church gained its first adherent, in the person of a man named Hung-shan. A little later a second, named Hsiang, was welcomed to the tiny gatherings for prayer, and at the close of the third month another man, known as Wu-p'ao, was added to the number of worshippers.

Wu-p'ao, or Black Cannon as we may call him in English, was a barber, who had reduced himself by dissipation, until his face was so emaciated and blackened by opium, that the village children scarce dared go near him to be shaved.

Mao was preaching at the Tong Hill village when first he met Wu-p'ao. It happened that he was telling the people how God loves men and saves them from sin, when he noticed the

poor “opium devil” hanging upon the outskirts of the crowd, with his shabby barber’s boxes swung by a carrying-pole from one shoulder. At the close of his address, seeing the man as if about to leave, he called to him to wait for a moment, and, pointing to his forehead, said, “I wish you to shave me.”

In a moment the burden was on the ground. A brass basin was produced from the dingy circular box, carried at one end of the pole, and a supply of hot water was obtained, apparently from nowhere, with astonishing celerity. A razor appeared from a drawer in the truncated red pyramid, carried at the other end of the pole; forthwith Mao was seated upon the flattened pyramid, beneath the barber’s hands.

As Wu-p’ao worked, Mao told him the story of the gospel. The barber himself was as dirty as his battered basin and greasy head-cloth, and his person smelt of stale opium, but the preacher forgot all that in his anxiety to win his heart.

“What is your distinguished name?” asked Mao, as he counted out some cash to pay what he owed. “I may wish sometimes to send for you to shave me at the ‘worship hall,’ in Upper Street.”

“My unworthy name is Wu-p’ao; this is my native village. Whenever you send for me I shall be at your service.”

After this the intimacy deepened, the barber

hearing more and more of the gospel at each visit to Upper Street. At last one day he went of his own accord to call upon the preacher.

“Our scholars tell men to live virtuous lives, but forget to do so themselves,” said he. “I have come to ask if you are like them, or whether possibly you live according to what you say.”

“I follow the truth I preach, so far as I am able,” said Mao, “and so do all good Christians.”

The barber apparently was able to satisfy himself by enquiries, made among the preacher's neighbours, for not long afterwards he began to attend the ‘worship hall.’

When Mao returned the visit, he realized more clearly than before, the miserable poverty of Wu-p'ao's life.

“You must come and stay with me in Upper Street,” he said. “There you will have plenty of custom. I will teach you to read, and it may please God to let me help you to give up this terrible opium, which is ruining you body and soul.”

During the next ten days the poor fellow passed through an awful struggle. Mao nursed him night and day, rising at all hours to see him through the paroxysms which threatened to sweep him back into his sin. He gave his patient no medicine, but inspired him to trust that Saviour, who alone could cast out the

destroying devil. Thus he prayed and wrestled, carrying him from one stage of recovery to another. Often the sufferer, when attacked by the opium craving, would go to a hill-side near the village and plead with the unseen God, in whom he had come to believe, for strength to conquer his weakness ; and so at last the victory was won.

Perhaps this case illustrates, as well as any other, Mao's power of making others trust God for help, and the wonderful manner in which he could compel those who were sorely tempted to pray themselves to victory.

One of the first things Wu-p'ao did after becoming a Christian, was to pay off debts contracted during his opium-eating days. Such extraordinary behaviour attracted considerable attention in the district. A ferryman on the river, some miles away, said to one of the Christians :

“It is worth while to worship God. When your Wu-p'ao used to cross in my boat, to extort food and money from his married sister at Ta-u, not a cash could I wring from him to pay my fare. Now he never goes to beg from his sister, and if he takes the ferry he always pays me my money.”

The change was known far and near. Wu-p'ao's acquaintances saw the worn black “opium face” change, the cheeks filling out and actually

becoming ruddy, as he grew strong and fit for work again, and, alluding to the black and red cannon cards, used in gambling, they said, "We will not call him 'Black Cannon' any more, but 'Red Cannon.'" The force of the allusion will be understood, when it is pointed out that the red cannon counts for more than the black in a Chinese game of cards.

On one occasion a scholar said to the reclaimed opium devil :

"Your Jesus doctrine only touches the skin, the doctrine of Confucius enters the bones."

"If that is so," answered he, "those who best know the teaching of Confucius will be most influenced by it."

"Certainly," said the scholar.

"Then the literati, who spend their days in studying the books, ought to be the best of men, but, as we all know, too often they are the very worst. Is not this a proof that the teaching of Confucius does not enter the bone?"

The scholar made no answer.

"Look at what Jesus has done for me," continued Wu-p'ao. "If His doctrine only touched the skin, could it have cured me of opium, filthy language and like faults?"

In 1887, along with two others, who with him were the first Christian confessors from among the people of Yingnei, he was baptized.

As may be well imagined, the barber's altered

life gave a stimulus to the preaching of the gospel in the neighbourhood. How much it helped to certify the truth may be gathered from the following incident. One day Mao took a young preacher from another station to call upon a literary man who lived not far away from the ‘worship hall.’ The scholar, a venerable personage with a white beard, received the visitors courteously, and when they referred to the Christian Church, said laconically :

“A holy Church, a holy Church.”

The stranger, unaccustomed to hear such praise of the so-called ‘barbarian’ sect, thought that the scholar must be referring to the Confucian cult, so ventured to remark :

“The Christian Church also is holy, O venerable, elder born.”

“It is a holy Church,” said their host once more, in emphatic tones.

“Does the venerable elder born speak of the Church as holy, because he has read the Bible ?” queried the preacher.

“No.”

“Has he been to hear the teaching at the ‘worship hall’ ?”

“No.”

“Does he speak flatteringly then ?”

“No. Listen, and I will tell you why I speak of the Church as holy. The school of Confucius has over a hundred graduates within this dis-

trict, but it has no power to change the lives of its disciples, who gamble, smoke opium, and 'eat the people's money.' It is not so with the Church of Jesus. Look at my nephew Wu-p'ao, who has just been here to shave me. What a wreck he was—an opium devil, a common rascal—but the Church of Jesus has cast the devil out of him and made him a new man."

CHAPTER XXIII

CASTING OUT DEVILS

“Wherever I have seen the print of His shoe on the earth, there have I coveted to set my foot too.”—JOHN BUNYAN.

A LARGER shop, which was now rented for use as a preaching hall at Yingnei, was also situated in what may be called the opium quarter of the village. Low-browed structures, closed in front by dingy shutters and floored with clay, lined both sides of the street. The walls were pounded earth, the roofs grey tiles, supported by blackened rafters. At the east end of the row was a bit of open ground, planted here and there with fruit trees, and honeycombed with manure pits where it bordered the road, while its southern edge sloped gently towards the river. Between its trees, the eye caught glimpses of the green peaks and blue-black rocks of the Yingnei mountains. The shops, which ran along the top of Upper Street, seemed to blink and drowse in the bright sun, like the sordid people who frequented them, as if ashamed of the skulking depravity of half a

hundred villages, gathered within their dark recesses.

If such surroundings did something to encourage the idea in heathen minds that Christianity was a disreputable religion, they at least brought Mao to the very heart of the misery and need of the locality. Here he laboured, pushing outwards in every direction to hamlets, scattered far over the plain, or perched upon the sides of the green mountains within which Yingnei is contained as in a cup. He took the whole district for his diocese, making shift to visit every house and village which he could find within its bounds.

The people made life difficult in many ways for the preacher who had come to live among them. Playing on the meaning of his name, they would call from their doorways:

“ Wild-cat come claw,
Our house has mice
For you to gnaw ”;

or

“ Mao Mao big-head,
You great stupid.”

Their opposition showed itself in acts of petty persecution. They interrupted him when speaking; they infested his bedroom; mischievous boys would seize a moment when he was engaged with visitors, to dive into the kitchen

and empty his supply of salt into the rice-pot on the fire.

A local celebrity named Yin strolled in one afternoon, and seeing dinner on the table, said :

“Why don't you thank your God for this food? Let me see how you say grace.”

When the preacher shut his eyes to return thanks, the thief carried off the dishes, and having disposed of their contents, came back with easy effrontery, and said :

“Why are you not eating your dinner? Who can have taken it away? Tell your God to bring it back again for you to eat.”

Even the children, when they saw the weary preacher returning from a long day's work among the villages, would hide where the road passed near the edges of the rice-fields and splash water on him as he walked by.

As in other places, the soldier of the cross had to bear hardship at Yingnei.

Once, when he was preaching to the people, a man slapped him on the cheek. He half turned his head with a quiet word and went on with the message. A fellow dashed his hat off with a blow, which carried it on to the low roof of a house near by. Another struck him in the back with a stone.

The unfriendly feeling of the district seemed

to intensify in the immediate neighbourhood of the church, which, as we have seen, had been moved to roomier quarters on the other side of the street. Next door to it, on the west side, was an actors' inn, kept by a man named Ts'e, a determined opponent of the gospel. On Sundays, when the gong was rung to assemble the congregation, he would go to his shop door and clash a pair of cymbals, to make the bystanders laugh; when if Mao ventured to remonstrate, he would answer:

“You are going to hold your service, I am going to hold mine.”

Then he would set the actors to play pipes, drums and rattles, until the din made worship next door well-nigh impossible.

On the other side of the church was an opium den, kept by a man named Feng Hsien, who was no friend either to the doctrine or its preacher. The drug vendor, who was a large consumer of his own wares, suffered from a painful form of indigestion. Whilst the den was full of smokers he managed to hide his discomfort, but at night, when the last belated customer had left the place, he would relieve himself by crying aloud. One night, hearing sounds of distress next door, Mao went to Feng Hsien's shop, where he found him in great pain. Some warm tea fortunately relieved the trouble, and after a short time the

preacher was able to go home to bed. After several visits, the poor fellow softened a little, and was willing to allow Mao to pray with him. A section had, for the convenience of some previous tenant, been cut out of the wall, dividing his shop from that now used as a 'worship hall,' and the gap temporarily filled up with bamboo wattle. Through this slight partition the sound of voices penetrated clearly, so that, long before he had entered the church, Feng Hsien already knew something about the gospel.

"If you don't serve God," said his neighbour, "you will be more blameworthy than other people, for you hear the truth every day."

The opium dealer's mind slowly opened to the light, and in course of time he began to join the Christians in their gathering for prayer and instruction.

One night, after the congregation had dispersed, a visitor,¹ who was occupying the sleeping quarters behind the 'worship hall,' heard a continuous muttering on the other side of the thin partition. Curious to know what was happening, he listened attentively, and caught the sound of words which seemed to be familiar. Presently he discovered that someone next door was reading aloud from St. John's Gospel. It was

¹ The Rev. John Watson.

Feng Hsien. Afterwards, when describing the incident to a friend, the visitor wrote: "To hear amidst the midnight silence the holy words of Jesus, in the feeble tones of an opium smoker, was an experience not soon to be forgotten."

Next night the visitor, accompanied by Mao, had a talk with Feng Hsien, who now attended the evening services, and was anxious to give up opium, although unwilling to close his shop.

"Do you ever use our Lord's Prayer?" asked the visitor.

"Yes."

"May I ask you to be good enough to repeat it?"

He repeated the sacred words.

"What do you mean when you say, 'Give us this day our daily bread'? Your daily bread comes from selling opium. When you pray this prayer, does it not mean, Send many customers to my shop to buy opium?"

The man nodded his head, but said nothing, sitting the while with eyes almost shut and head sunk down between peaked shoulders, seeming to take but little notice of what was happening.

"You wish to give up opium because it injures you," continued the visitor, "but when you pray for daily bread, in effect you desire people to buy what you wish to give up. If you follow the Saviour, who teaches us to love

our neighbour as ourselves, you ought to urge them to forsake the very thing which you sell them for your own profit."

Feng Hsien nodded his head languidly, but said nothing.

Next night, after evening prayer, he lifted his blinking eyes, and looking into the visitor's face, remarked :

"Teacher, I have been thinking over what you said last night. I cannot pray that prayer."

After nearly a year's struggle Feng Hsien was enabled by the grace of God to give up his lucrative opium business. The sacrifice cost him all, leaving him to earn a scanty living by selling oil in the villages of the district. So weakened was he by chronic indigestion, that he was often very weary as he carried his burden of oil from place to place ; but he cheered himself on by telling the people everywhere he went about the love of God. They were the more willing to listen, since they knew that for conscience' sake he had given up a profitable business, to depend upon a pittance won by daily toil.

He broke with the opium habit as quickly as his health permitted him, his teacher prescribing no medicine, but encouraging him to trust in God as his healer. In 1891 he was received into the Church, and, when more fully instructed, was employed to sell books and to preach the gospel.

Unfortunately his strength, undermined by years of vice, gave way entirely; to the pains of indigestion were added the squalors of a wasting leprosy, which compelled him to give up all work and entailed months of lonely misery at the last. The body, burdened by disease, sank slowly, but the soul remained steadfast until the end came, and he died victorious.

Another opponent was Hung Kung-wu, a military graduate of the first degree, who lived opposite the 'worship hall.' It is not possible to describe the hundred and one petty mischiefs which this man did to the church and its leader, nor the deft malice with which he was ever trying to entangle the Christians in their talk.

One day he said to Mao: "You are well acquainted with the Barbarian Classics. I suppose that you know the 'Four Books' also?"

"Yes," said Mao, suspecting no pitfall.

"You know the 'Four Books,' do you? That means that you can interpret every passage they contain, which is more than the majority of our scholars can do. How come you to know the Books so well?"

"My uncle taught me to read them."

"Send for your uncle," cried Mr. Hung, "I will pay for a chair¹ to bring him from the city. Let him be judge, and if you can interpret the

¹ A sedan chair.

passages which we set you, I will pay a forfeit of ten dollars."

Mao of course hastened to say that there were sentences in the 'Four Books,' too obscure for anyone to render clearly. He had spoken in a general way when he said that he knew them, not expecting to have his words taken literally.

After a time Mr. Hung changed his attitude, although he still loved to catch folk in their talk whenever he could do so. No one could live in contact with the preacher's holy life, without being affected by its influence. So much impressed indeed was the old graduate, that he ordered one of his nephews, who had fallen into bad ways, to go to church, where he would learn to do better. "Had it been possible," he said, "for me to follow the maxims of Christ myself, I would have become a Christian, but they are difficult to obey, and I am old." In after days he said, "I have never feared the face of man before, but I am afraid of Mao, his words go right to my heart."

Alas! Mr. Hung contented himself with praising God's servant and never followed his teaching. In later days he took to gambling, and, when over seventy years of age, ruined his family by this vice.

Another of the antagonists, who encircled the church at Englai like a hedge of spikes, was

Shou Hsien, a native doctor, who also lived in Upper Street. This man hindered many people, especially women, from attending service, by standing in front of the doorway and abusing all who came and went about the church. He also was influenced, though more slowly, and became less bitter in his attitude as time went on.

CHAPTER XXIV

FRESH RECRUITS

“ Soon will He show thee all His wounds and say,
‘ Long have I known thy name—know thou My Face alway.’ ”

KEBLE.

Not long after he had become a Christian, Black Cannon persuaded an opium smoker named Ho to go with him to a service, in Upper Street. Ho, who had heard something of the gospel when Mao was preaching in his village a few weeks before, consented willingly, and was so much interested by what he heard, that he continued to attend service. At the ‘ worship hall ’ he learned to read the New Testament and some hymns, and, more important still, he learned to pray.

Two years later he went to Singapore in search of a fortune, but business was bad at the time, and before long he did not know where to turn for a pittance. Fortunately, in his extremity, he recalled the teaching which he had received at Yingnei, and, going to a low hill in the jungle, asked God to show him what to do. When he had

finished his prayer, it seemed to be made quite clear to him that he ought to sail by a steamer which was leaving for the Dutch Indies. This was the turning-point of his life, for almost immediately after the steamer reached her destination, he found employment, and before long was prospering in business on his own account.

There was no church in the place where Ho now found himself, and, so far as he knew, he was the only individual in the neighbourhood who thought about worshipping God. One day, however, a travelling colporteur visited the town, from whom he bought a Bible. He had no images, idolatrous lanterns, or incense in the shop, and, what astonished his customers almost as much as the lack of these things, was, that he kept his Bible lying open before him on the counter, to read whenever he had leisure.

On his return to China a few years later, he was delighted to receive a visit from his former teacher.

“I suppose you have learned a great deal since we met,” said Mao, after the usual enquiries about the family and other matters had been made.

“There is no church in the place where I have been living. I fear I have not made much progress during these three years.”

“How old was your youngest boy when you went abroad?”

“Four years old.”

“If, when you returned, you had found that he had not grown at all during your absence, would you not have been disappointed?”

“Indeed I should. The child was only a baby, now he is a sturdy boy.”

“When you went abroad, you were my child in the faith, to-day you tell me that you have not grown during these three years. You can very well understand how sorry I am.”

The illustration struck Ho so forcibly, that after this interview he read his Bible more diligently than ever.

When, finally, he returned from abroad to settle at Yingnei, the ‘worship hall’ and everything connected with it were changed. On his first Sunday at home he took with him to church the old brown Bible, which, worn by the usage of twenty years, spoke eloquently of persistent endeavour after spiritual things, amid loneliness and neglect. So anxious was he to live in accordance with its teaching, that he went to the hospital in Chuanchow and was cured of the opium habit, contracted in early days; that this hindrance being removed, he might enter the Church.

Meanwhile Mao was busy beating up recruits. Near the ‘worship hall’ he met with a young fellow named Yü, who was impressed by these words from the preacher’s message:

"There will be a reckoning after death, when we meet God face to face."

"What chance shall we have then?" queried the lad.

"God is good to those who throw themselves upon His mercy," said Mao.

From that time young Yü went secretly to church.

"You should venture more for Christ," said Mao, and then he read him the story of Nicodemus.

The lad's father beat him repeatedly and threatened to cut him off from the family, unless he gave up frequenting the Barbarian Church.

"Beat me if you will," said Yü; "I must go to the services. There is no other way for it."

Shortly afterwards, when the native minister in charge of the district visited the village, the lad's father dragged his son out of the church and tied him to a rough granite pillar, in front of the building by the roadside.

"Come," said he, "I will show your minister how we treat disobedient sons in our village. You will be fortunate indeed if I do not beat you to death."

The sound of the blows brought both the preacher and his guest, the native pastor, to the door.

"The lad is your own, you are free to beat him as you please," said the minister, astutely



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divining that the father only wished to frighten his son and had no serious intention of doing him an injury.

Mao said nothing, but stood near his convert silently praying. Presently one of the bystanders loosened the fastenings and set Yü free. The prayer had been answered. In time the father's hatred was to a certain extent overcome, and his son became a member of the Church.

CHAPTER XXV

“VICISTI”

“Every time we do a deed of love in the name of Jesus, we take a step towards Him.”

PARTICULARLY anxious to win a hearing for the gospel among educated people, Mao visited many of the literati in their homes at Yingnei, and left a list behind him of fifteen with whom he had been on friendly terms. Eight were graduates, several of whom attended service occasionally. One of their number, Hung Yüan, was almost lost to the Church by an indiscretion on the part of a colporteur, who was preaching to a group of people in the chapel, when the scholar quoted the passage, “The study of strange doctrines is injurious indeed”¹ in classical Chinese, and asked him to render it into the vernacular.

“Teacher,” said the colporteur, parrying one thrust with another, “you have just come from a Confucian school. If, when you go back to it, your pupils should ask about this phrase, and you should answer, I have just had it

¹ Sacred Edict.

explained to me by a stranger of the Jesus Church, would you not be greatly ashamed?”

On receiving this answer the teacher's face flushed, and he left the place. Mao missed the man from his accustomed seat at the 'Hall,' and asked what could have happened to him. The colporteur told him about the quotation, and the conversation which had taken place regarding it.

“We have hurt him,” said Mao, employing the plural pronoun according to the gracious Chinese usage, in order to “save his companion's face.” “Let us go to him at once.” The visit was paid, and, matters being put right, the scholar attended service as before, and afterwards became a teacher in the mission school at Chuanchow.

A story, which will not soon be forgotten in the district, describes how Mao fared when visiting one of the local literati. The scholar, full of his own importance as an accredited representative of Chinese learning, gave him a cool reception when he called, disputing what he said and refusing to accept quotations from the Bible as of any count in the discussion. After much patient argument, Mao left the house at last, feeling that he had made no impression on the man.

Next day he called again. The scholar, nettled by this second visit, attacked the Christian teaching in an uncompromising

manner, and made false charges against its advocate, growing so angry at last that he blew to a flame the smouldering hemp stalk¹ which he held in his hand, and, scorching Mao's chin with it, said :

“ If you come here again I will beat you.”

The following morning, after much prayer, Mao paid another visit to the irascible teacher, who “ changed face ” when he saw him and broke into a storm of bad language. When at last there came a pause, Mao began to speak, but the other cut him short, saying :

“ Yesterday I said that I would beat you if you came back to this house,” and forthwith he struck him with his tobacco pipe.

Despite the insult put upon him, an insult which, according to China's code, no educated man might condone, Mao, after a night partly spent in prayer, invaded the enemy for the fourth time with a friendly face, as if nothing had happened.

When the teacher's eye fell upon him in the doorway, he was so much taken aback that the abusive epithets died upon his lips, and, in his confusion, he asked his pertinacious visitor to sit down. Here was a man on whom ill-usage had as much effect as “ pouring water upon a stone.”

¹ After the fibre has been stripped from it, the inner stalk of the hemp is dried, for use as pipe-lights.

"I submit," said he, handing Mao some tea ;
 "you indeed are worthy to be my mentor.
 Confucius teaches us to avenge our injuries.
 Your Master teaches you to overcome your
 enemies by kindness."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DAUGHTER CHURCH

“ A deed magnanimous, a noble thought,
Are as the music singing through the years
When surly Time the tyrant domineers
Against the lute whereout of it was wrought.”

The Divan of Abu'l-ala, XIV.

IN 1887 Mao was stirred to fresh effort by the news of a church, begun in Shanghai by native Christians at their own expense. In the brief narrative already referred to, he writes: “On the third of the twelfth moon I urged the Yingnei brethren to open a station at Eastfield Bridge. Finding that they welcomed the idea, Sheng and I went to that place and began work. Leaving Sheng at the inn, to carry on the campaign as best he could till the end of the month, I returned to Yingnei. On the 24th I went again to Eastfield Bridge and held service with the people.”

The description of an incident which happened during this visit we owe to an eye-witness. Mao, who on the last day of the year had gone to Behind the Red-house, a village not far from

Eastfield Bridge, was surrounded by a number of children, who threw broken tiles at him. Fortunately one of the chief people of the place, a man named Ch'en Shui, coming upon the scene at the moment, drove off the children and took the stranger home with him, to spend New Year's Eve at his house.

In the course of the evening the host produced an opium pipe and was about to smoke it, when Mao spoke to him so effectively about the evils of the habit, that he put aside his opium and did not use it that night. The next day being Sunday, they began the New Year by holding divine service together in one of the rooms of the house. After service Mao went back to Eastfield Bridge, to meet with the people at the inn, returning in the evening to his kind host. For three days he was most hospitably entertained by Ch'en Shui, who during that time drank in an astonishing amount of Christian knowledge.

A little later in the year, when again at this village, Mao found that the seed sown had germinated, a proof of this being that his friend no longer smoked opium, though he still swallowed a small quantity.

"Give it up altogether," the preacher urged.

"I take only a very little," said the old man.

"If you were about to entertain a distinguished guest, you would not leave the smallest quantity

of filth upon the floor, for fear you should offend him. How then can you leave the smallest quantity of this evil thing in your life to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, when He comes to dwell within your heart?"

At the close of the discussion the friends got upon their knees before God. After they had prayed together for a time, Ch'en Shui rose to his feet, and, taking his pipe, lamp and other implements, dashed them to pieces upon the floor. Before long he was completely free of the habit, and, by God's grace, lived a consistent Christian life to the end of his days.

The number of worshippers at Eastfield Bridge being increased by the accession of Ch'en Shui and others, it was felt that the inn, which was then in a ruinous condition, was unsuitable for public worship, therefore, as Mao continues in his narrative, "accompanied by Shui I secured a shop, beneath the tree at Ao Pi, in Eastfield Bridge, for a yearly rent of three and a half dollars."

"Although their preacher encouraged their liberality both by precept and example, the Yingnei Christians, who were but few in number, had difficulty in raising funds for the new station, To one friend, who had promised 60 cents towards the sum needed, he said :

"You always give me a meal when I call at your house. Let us agree to dispense with this

hospitality, and then you will be able to give 40 cents more. Make your subscription a dollar."

The narrative goes on :

"The money collected still being insufficient, we asked the Brookend congregation¹ to help with the furnishing of the 'worship hall' at Eastfield Bridge. This they did, and several of the members also went over regularly to join in the Sunday services, and so the work at Eastfield Bridge was founded."

Wu-p'ao, the converted barber, who already had done yeoman service among the heathen at Eastfield Bridge, was afterwards sent to sell books and to preach there, the Christians from Yingnei going in turn to help him on "worship days."

¹ Now a fully organized church supporting its own minister.

CHAPTER XXVII

SEEKING THE LOST

“Whoever fears God, fears to sit^{at} ease.”—E. B. BROWNING.

A TRYING form of vertigo, which affected Mao when crossing steep or difficult places, rendered preaching among the mountain villages around Yingnei no easy matter. Once when going with a Christian, named Ch'ieh, to a hamlet on a hill-side, he suddenly grew dizzy and nearly fell.

“If we can find another path by which to return, I must take it, even though it should add five li to the distance,” he gasped out, when at last they reached the summit. But there was no other road, and on the homeward journey the companions had to hire a man, by whose aid Ch'ieh supported Mao under the arms, and so lowered him to the bottom of the slope.

When the descent had been made, Mao turned to his friend and said, “It was safer so.”

“There was one thing lacking, however,” said Ch'ieh, with imperturbable gravity.

“What was that?” queried Mao.

“We ought to have had ropes tied round us

and men to pay them out from above, as we crept down the face of the hill," said the grim old fighting man,¹ a touch of irrepressible amusement struggling with the affectionate regard which he felt for his devoted comrade as he added, "If one of us had slipped, we three would all have fallen down together."

"To have had ropes would have been safer," said Mao, unconscious of the lurking irony of his friend's suggestion.

Though much tried himself, and sometimes humbled before others by this infirmity, he did not allow it to interfere with his duties, going wherever there was an opportunity of preaching the gospel, his devotion ever finding some means to master the weakness of a frail body; on more than one occasion, when seized by vertigo at the end of a bridge, he got a man to take each hand, while a third held him by his queue, and so led him across.

Borne with patience and remedied by sheer moral courage, the physical defect remained—a living cross which he carried with him to the grave. It is when we remember this fact, that we can imagine in some degree what it meant for a man "who dared not walk a two-plank bridge alone," to face the strenuous life of a preacher in hilly Fuhkien.

¹ Before his conversion Ch'ieh had been a noted boxer, reputed equal to ten ordinary men in a fight.

The strain of the four laborious years, which had elapsed since the opening of Yingnei, had told upon Mao's strength. Signs of weakness showed themselves, and in the beginning of 1889 he went to the city for medical advice. There it was found that his heart had been affected, and that it would be necessary for him to rest for a time. All preaching and even study having been forbidden, another worker was sent to Yingnei, and Mao went to live quietly at his own home in the city.

After a few weeks at Lowfield Pond, the invalid felt so much better that he was able to attend a week-night service at the South Street Church, where, absorbed by the interest of the hour, he forgot the doctor's orders and prayed aloud. So difficult indeed was it to prevent his study of the Bible that Tu, for the time more careful of his brother than usual, would hide his books to put temptation out of his reach, and on several occasions bolted his door to keep him from preaching to the visitors who called upon the family.

After six months in the city Mao was able to resume work once more. Mr. Ch'en, the minister of the South Street Church, who visited Yingnei not long afterwards, recalls an incident which may be taken as fairly typical of daily efforts made by Mao to win the heathen, efforts too often without apparent result. They were

walking along the road together when Mao saw a Buddhist priest a little way off, walking along a path which converged towards the one which they were following, and called to him, saying :

“Come, come, you must come. I wish to talk to you.”

The monk, surprised by so urgent an invitation from a stranger, hesitated, but, on Mao's redoubling his efforts, yielded to persuasion and went towards him. When the man came up, Mao began to speak to him. He stood in the hot sunshine, his expression changing from expectancy to disappointment, as he found that instead of receiving alms he was expected to listen to the gospel message. Disgust showed sudden in his face, and he broke away in manifest displeasure, saying, “Hai-ai-ai-yah, I do not understand,” a gust of anger transforming the simple words into a volley of resentment.

So far as can be ascertained, this man never turned to Christ, yet Mao's Spirit-directed effort cannot be said to have been fruitless. The priest's attention must have been arrested at the moment, and upon the preacher's companions these insistent, tireless efforts to win souls had an effect, which has acted as a stimulus to the Chuanchow Church for years.

Another incident which made a profound impression upon some of the Christians, happened in the church at Yingnei, when a crowd of

heathen people taunted Mao with "eating the foreigners' rice." At once he took up their taunt and turned it against themselves.

"Is not the charge which you have made," said he, "the best proof that the foreigners' teaching is true? Do you collect money in order to send people with the teaching of our 'Books' to the ignorant? If you had a little brother lost in the streets of a great city, would you not gladly hire messengers to go and search for him? That," he continued, "is what the foreigners are doing, when they provide my rice that I may come and seek for you, their lost brothers."

CHAPTER XXVIII

“ IN LABOURS OFT ”

“ Quick in a moment, infinite forever,
Send an arousal better than I pray,
Give me a grace upon the faint endeavour,
Souls for my hire and Pentecost to-day.”

S. Paul, F. W. H. MYERS.

PREACHING had become such a passion with Mao that it encroached even upon such necessary concerns of daily life as eating, dressing and travelling. Often, after a long morning's work, he would dash into his rooms with a parcel of vermicelli, just bought, souse it in boiling water, eat it, and be off again to the all-absorbing employment of soul-winning.

One day, he was preparing breakfast before starting on a preaching expedition to a distant village, when, through the doorway, he noticed a man in the road and called on him to wait for a moment. The man giving no heed to this invitation, Mao left his half-cooked breakfast and followed him outside. The stranger paused to listen to the message of God's mercy, and the neighbours gathered round to see what

was happening, whilst men and women hung about the doorways, or leaned over the unglazed shop windows. The speaker did not know how long he had been speaking, when at last he left the street, and went back to the 'worship hall,' but one of the Christians, who looked in at the moment, went into the kitchen and saw that the rice on the fire had boiled, until it was "curled open at the ends." "What's this?" cried he; "it is nearly noon and you have not eaten yet." Mao, who had entirely forgotten about the meal, could hardly believe that he had not taken his breakfast.

So keen was he to speak to people on the roads, that, before starting with him upon a journey, his friends had to bargain with him that they should reach a given spot by a given time.

The story is told of how early one morning he started from a village some four miles away, to return to Yingnei, where the Christians were to meet with him and discuss some business matter. Before he had walked very far, he met several men upon the road and began to talk to them. Others joined the group, and considerable time had elapsed before he could tear himself away from his impromptu congregation. At last, recollecting the duties of the day which lay before him, he said good-bye to these friends and started homewards once more.

Presently another opportunity of speaking came in his way, and again he stopped. The joy of seeking to save men laid hold of him, and soon the Christians and their business were again forgotten, as he went from house to house, from resting-place to resting-place, preaching the unsearchable riches of God's grace. Thus it happened, that though he had started for Yingnei early in the morning, "people were lighting their lamps in the village streets" when he reached the 'worship hall.' Despite the easy views of punctuality which obtain where time is cheap and clocks are few, the Yingnei Christians were indignant over the delay, and said :

"Why have you kept us waiting so long? Surely you need not have made a day's journey out of a four-mile walk."

Mao only answered :

"There was a glorious opportunity for preaching to-day."

Another incident shows how entirely the disposal of time was subordinated to the supreme interest of his life. A Christian, who was a keen business man, wished to make an appointment to meet him one Monday.

"Any day but that, or Sunday," said Mao. "I have little time for business matters on a Monday."

"Why not?" asked his friend.

"I keep Mondays for passing on Sunday's message to others," was the unexpected answer.

He was a born theologian, seizing upon the central truths of the gospel and making them the chief theme of his ministry. Favourite subjects were "Sin, as illustrated by the life of Samson," "Glorying in the Cross of Christ," "God who hath called you unto His Kingdom and Glory," "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." An expression often upon his lips was "a heart like the heart of Christ"; another, "The love of Christ constraineth me." That love was the great force behind his life and preaching.

He often spoke of the Church as the Body of Christ on earth. Its teachers were His eyes. The feet, hands, mouth of its members the means by which the indwelling Lord communicated with a dying world. The Christian must daily offer himself a living sacrifice that Christ may work through him.

It was a spirit of sacrifice such as this, which made him ever apt to seize any chance of speaking to needy souls, and made him skilful in using passing incidents to wing the lessons which he sought to impart. We have already seen how admirably he could adapt even the sordid occupation of a wayside beggar, to the uses of the gospel. Nothing came amiss to

one whose touch turned all to homiletical gold. One afternoon, while preaching at Yingnei, the sound of an open-air orchestra, followed by the falsetto voices of some actors, broke in upon his discourse, tripping up the attention of his hearers. Quick as a flash he caught the possibilities of the situation and changed disaster into victory.

"That sound, by turning your thoughts from higher things, harms you even within this place," said he. "A street play is like a tiger-trap, which gives way beneath the feet of the unwary and engulfs him before he knows his danger."

His success as a preacher sprang from an unquestioning belief in the power of the gospel to touch men's hearts.

On one occasion, when writing about a blind opium smoker nearly seventy years of age, he said :

"On the seventh of the eleventh month Wu-p'ao visited him, preached the gospel and exhorted him to believe on the Saviour and to pray. He at once believed, and that evening prayed. He continued in faith and prayer, and by the fifteenth had given up smoking opium ; and that without any trouble. This shows that God most truly cares for men and proves that the Lord's words, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' are not simply words." This phrase,

“The Lord’s words are not simply words,” describes once and for all the faith which made Mao’s message the power it was in so many lives.

A Christian, who lives by the banks of the Anki River, far from Christian influences, tells how everything was changed for him one day by hearing Brother Mao speak from the words, “God hath remembered her iniquities.”¹ “The foreigners have a contrivance,” said he, “by which they can use the sun to picture a man, whatever he may be doing, or wherever he may be. How much more is God, who made the sun, able to picture what we do in the book of His remembrance. At the judgment He will show us all that our hands and feet have ever done. He will show us ourselves, as we did this, or that, forgotten thing, saying, ‘This you did, and thus you did it.’ We shall not be able to deny our portrait, or our actions, when the Judge who forgets nothing thus brings our iniquities to remembrance.

“The foreigners have another contrivance by which they catch the words men say and store them up for years. When it is set in motion, words uttered years before repeat themselves in the very tone and accent of the speaker’s voice. So at God’s judgment, words long

¹ Rev. xviii. 5.

forgotten will be brought back. We shall hear our own voice speaking them, as at the first, and stand condemned; we shall know that ‘God hath remembered our iniquities.’”

CHAPTER XXIX

WILD BEASTS

“ Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Framed thy fearful symmetry ? ”

WILLIAM BLAKE.

CHINESE life, with its strange vicissitudes, might well spur the preacher on to speak of judgment to come, and urge him to “put forth all his strength” for the salvation of his neighbours. Nowhere in all the world do the living walk so close under the shadow of death as in the Middle Kingdom, where, at a moment’s notice, an outbreak of plague, cholera, a clan fight, a fire, or, in some parts, wild beasts may hurry them into eternity.

One evening news was brought that tigers were about ; animals had been carried off from the farmsteads near Yingnei, and a pig had been taken in the village, not far from the church. Mao, concerned lest any of the Christians who were in the habit of joining him at evening prayer might be seized, sent to warn them of the danger.

Yü and Ts'e, however, went to church that evening as usual. At the close of the service their careful pastor tried to persuade them to spend the night with him, but they resisted all entreaties, and so, after commending them to God, he let them go. They had scarce been gone five minutes when one of the tigers killed a pig, about a hundred paces from the church door, whilst they safely reached home, unconscious of what had happened.

Another tiger incident ended very differently. Yin, the thief who stole Mao's dinner whilst he was saying grace, was the victim. This man, who for a time had come so far under the influence of the truth as to abandon many evil habits, tired of the restraints of Christianity, and in spite of all the preacher's remonstrances, returned to his old life.

One warm summer night, under cover of the darkness, he robbed a potato field, and, creeping back to the town with his booty, tried to find admittance at an opium shop, nearly opposite to the 'worship hall.' It was past midnight, and failing to awaken the inmates, he lay down at last to sleep upon a counter which ran along the outside of the shop. Farther on in the night, the people in the adjoining houses were startled by a terrible scream and the sound of scuffling in the street, but nobody dared to go outside to see what was happening.

Next morning, when the doors were opened, the neighbours found bloodstains, which they tracked along the street and out into the country to the top of a small hill not far away. There they found Yin's head and chest, with the feet lying near them, all the rest of his body having been devoured during the night. The tiger had come once more and carried him beyond his friends' recall.

THE HILL, FORT TO WHICH THE TIGER DRAGGED YIN'S BODY, WITH THE
NEW YINGNEI CHURCH IN THE FOREGROUND

CHAPTER XXX

WAR TO THE KNIFE

"Anima mea inter leones."

FIERCER than wild beasts was the spiritual opposition to be reckoned with at Yingnei, where some of the Christians may be said to have gone in danger of their lives. Among these was Hung Shu, who, with his sister Little Tortoise, was so interested by the gospel, that when the family sacrifices took place shortly after Mao's first visit to his home, he had to be compelled to share in them almost by force. As he went into the room where the altar stood, he said to a cousin, "I have yielded to my mother's persuasion for once, but after to-day I will never join in the worship of the ancestors again."

"We shall see about that," said his cousin, and lifting a large stone he felled him to the ground. Shu lay where he fell unconscious, until another relative carried him into his own room and laid him upon a bed. This good

Samaritan stanchd his wounds, but, failing to rouse him from the swoon in which he lay, took fright and brought him back again to his mother's house.

It was three days before the poor lad fully recovered consciousness, and for the rest of his life he suffered at intervals from the results of the blow. Mao nursed him through this illness, and, failing to induce the aggressor to provide medical attendance, managed to enlist the sympathies of another relative, who gave five dollars towards doctor's expenses, and, much against Mao's wishes, offered the means necessary to bring an action against the offending cousin.

After days of uncertainty Shu, in answer to many prayers, was brought back again to health and strength.

The bond formed on this occasion between teacher and pupil became a very close one, and whenever signs of mental trouble returned, Mao, with a devotion which was most touching, used to fast and pray for this son in the faith. The intervals between these fits of derangement were full of light and joy for poor Shu, who was baptized in 1887, and was specially useful in building up the work at Eastfield Bridge. So rapid was his advance in Christian knowledge, that he was entered at the Theological

College in Amoy to prepare for the ministry. When, later, his infirmity made it evident that his studies must be relinquished, Mao allowed him a dollar a month out of his own scanty pittance, and tended him with a father's care.

Another family to suffer from the uncompromising enmity of heathen Yingnei, was that of Ts'e, the man who formerly kept the actors' inn, next door to the church. Bitterly opposed to the gospel at first, Mao had, as we have seen, won him by continually going to see him at night, after his place was cleared of its noisy occupants. During these visits he taught him the way of salvation, and at last the inn-keeper, much against his will, was literally prayed out of bitter opposition to the truth. Every night, when parting with him, his visitor would say, "Let us talk to God together"; then, kneeling down, he would pour out petitions in his behalf.

The moment of Ts'e's repentance was a dramatic one. It was on a Sunday. The preacher had gone to beat the gong for service, when his neighbour, with a touch of the old unkindness, dashed out of the inn, cymbals in hand. Mao paused when he saw him next door, and, looking into his eyes, said quietly :

“A Ts‘e-ah,¹ A Ts‘e-ah, do you think that there is no God? If there really is a God, how will you answer Him when you meet Him by and by?”

Ts‘e lowered his cymbals, and, as he turned in the doorway the thought came to him, “What Mao says may be true after all; if there is a God, what then?”

The arrow had gone home. He gave himself to God that very day, bought a copy of the New Testament, and set himself to put his house in order. First he broke up his opium pipes and lamps, then he gave notice to the actors that he would keep the inn no longer. When his father discovered what had happened, he was angry and persecuted him bitterly. His wife also was furious, and showed her spite in a hundred ways. Sometimes she poured his rice into the pig tub, leaving him without breakfast; sometimes she refused to cook for him altogether. In the providence of God, however, she took very ill, and, finding that “neither idols nor doctors could effect a cure,” she said to her husband, “You say that your God is all-powerful; if He can heal me, I will worship Him along with you.” Mao went and prayed for her in the sick-room; his

¹ Both “a” and “ah” are sometimes added to names in familiar usage.

prayers were answered, and Mrs. Ts'e became a Christian.

Then fresh troubles began. A relative of the family was incensed when he found Mrs. Ts'e a changed woman, and threatened to break her legs if ever she went to the 'worship hall' again. It was no idle threat, for one evening soon afterwards, whilst Ts'e was absent at the church, the bully went to the house and ordered the inmates to open the door. On their refusing to do so, he began to force one of the windows. Seeing that the window would give way presently, Mrs. Ts'e blew out the light and, suddenly throwing open the door, dashed out of the house, hoping to reach Shu's home before her assailant had recovered from his surprise. The plan failed however, for, as she passed him, the man cut her over the forehead with a knife, and wounded her elsewhere in several places. The impetus of the rush carried her on for several yards, then a black mist swam up before her eyes, and she fell, covered with blood. The assassin, thinking that he had killed her, made off, and Shu's mother, hearing the disturbance, came out of her house and carried the wounded woman inside.

That night the bully followed up his attack by destroying the new convert's sugar-cane and other crops. But these and the other

wrongs inflicted on the family failed of their object. Ts'e stood firm, and with his wife and child was baptized in 1891, afterwards doing good service as a colporteur and preacher.

CHAPTER XXXI

AMONG THE VILLAGES

“The man most man with tend’rest human hands
Works best for man—as God in Nazareth.”

E. B. BROWNING.

MEANTIME, as the following instances will show, the work was extending in the country places round Yingnei. When Mao was passing through Field Gap, a village near the Anki River, he noticed a woman consulting a fortune-teller in front of her house.

Going up to her, he said:

“If you would but worship the true God, you would have good fortune both in this life and in the world to come. You need not trust any idol ‘Heir Apparent’¹ to intercede for you in the unseen world. Jesus, the Son of God, is the true ‘Heir Apparent.’”

The fortune-teller making some objection to this doctrine, Mao opened his Bible, and, reading from the Epistle to the Hebrews, explained that since we are God’s children, and since our Lord Jesus is the first-born among the many brethren of the heavenly

¹ An idol worshipped by fortune-tellers.

family, we may trust our future to Him, as to a faithful elder brother.

“But how are we to trust this Saviour Lord, of whom you tell us?” queried the woman.

Mao explained what trust meant, the trust of the child in its parents, of man in the Heavenly Father, of the sinner in the Saviour.

Then he showed her how to begin with what she could understand, going to worship at God’s house in Yingnei once in seven days. That for her would be to serve God. If she were willing to begin with that, God would make the next step plain. She would learn to know the Saviour, and would find happiness, such as this world could not bestow.

Mao’s words, simple as they were, lodged in the woman’s mind, and some weeks later, accompanied by her husband and two sons, she went to seek her fortune at Yingnei.

About this time, Mao in an unexpected manner found an entrance into the prosperous agricultural village of Road Weir. It so happened that one of its inhabitants, a young fellow named Float, heard of the barbarian church in Yingnei when at the market there. When he reached the place he found Mao at dinner.

“Come and dine with me,” said the preacher, making room for him at the table.

Float, who had heard of medicines being mixed with food by Christians, in order to "change men's hearts" against their will, declined the offer.

Noticing his confusion, Mao said kindly: "Perhaps you are engaged elsewhere. Go and have your meal with your friends; when you come back, I will tell you what you wish to know about our teaching."

The young farmer went out into the street and bought a couple of dough-nuts, which he munched on his way back to the 'worship hall.'

"Why here again so quickly?" said his new friend, as he re-entered the place. "You surely cannot have 'eaten to the full'?" See, this rice was bought in the market-place," he added, pointing to a dish upon the table, "and here is some beef from the butcher's near by. You need have no fear, the food is all right. Come, have some dinner, and then I will talk to you." The invitation was given so cordially that all Float's doubts flew out of the window, and he sat down and did ample justice to the good fare put before him.

That afternoon Mao preached about the folly of offering incense and paper money to the idols, of the useless sins which snare men's souls, gambling, opium smoking, avarice and the like.

"But this is no barbarian teaching," broke out the visitor, much surprised by precepts which appealed to him as altogether right. "You must come to our village and talk to the people there."

Some days later, the young man was cutting wood on the hill-side above Road Weir, when he heard that a stranger was preaching in the village below. "It is the teacher who gave me my dinner last market-day," thought he, and, hurrying down to the cluster of houses, he found his friend.

That day he gave himself to God, and his grandmother, a devout heathen, became interested in the gospel.

His wife refused to go with him to church, and continued to worship the ancestral tablets, until one day her little daughter sickened and died. Then, surprising to relate, her husband's grandmother, who had heard Mao say that Christians sinned when they offered incense to the spirits, said to her, "My grandson worships God, and you, who are his wife, must not burn any more incense, or things will go wrong with the family."

From that day Float's wife ceased to worship before the tablets and began to go to church. The old woman, unable to walk as far as Yingnei, did not become a professed Christian, but was considerably influenced by

the gospel. She owned a hill with a wood on it, near the village, and the desire of her old age had been that when she died, the trees should be cut and \$200 of the money realized by their sale, spent upon Buddhist masses for the welfare of her soul; but the teaching which she had heard from Mao so impressed her, that she gave up the idols, and as she neared the end she did not ask to have the heathen ceremonies, to which she had so long looked forward, performed.

Another of the new recruits was a man named P'ing, who suffered from ill-health and had made many pilgrimages to famous shrines in search of a cure. A sentence which he heard Mao use, when he first went to preach in the village, haunted him. It was this: "All men are guilty before God." The words seemed strange, and stranger than the words themselves was the fact that the more he thought about them, the more he was convinced that they were true. I have served the idols faithfully, thought he, and they have done nothing for me. I shall never be strong again until I repent and worship this supreme God.

His father, who was a geomancer, doctor, idol medium and fortune-teller, persecuted him for wishing to be a Christian.

"Why waste time by going to Yingnei?"

he would say. "Stay at home. If you must worship your God, do so in the house." But when his son stayed at home, he prevented him from having any spiritual communion, exclaiming:

"Don't sit there doing nothing like an idol; be off to the fields and work."

P'ing did not quarrel with his father, but tried to obey him in everything as far as possible, for Mao had said to him: "Do more than other people on the farm during the week-days, if you wish to go to church on Sundays. Consider your father in every way, your actions will influence him more than words."

P'ing followed this advice and his life was blessed to many, though his father never accepted the gospel and his uncle used to curse the preacher whenever he met him. In the course of time a church sprang up in the village of Road Weir, where there are now some thirty or forty of Mao's spiritual descendants.

IV
INGATHERING

CHAPTER XXXII

“THOU GOD SEEST ME”

“I felt like a stone sunk in a deep bog, but He came, who is mighty to save, and pulled me out.”—ST. PATRICK.

WHILST the work in the Yingnei district prospered, Mao's own home remained almost closed to the gospel. His younger brother still gave him special cause for anxiety. One of the preachers, who during this period spent some time with him, tells how he would suddenly go to the city, see Tu, and return to Yingnei, a round journey of nearly sixty miles. Sometimes he had scarcely got back when he had to set out again for Chuan-chow.

Once in the city, the delinquent had to be sought for—no easy task,—but Mao became skilful in finding out the places which he frequented.

A favourite haunt of his was a shop, kept by an opium smoker named Chang Yin, who made a living by selling a kind of dough-nuts, locally known as ‘larded devils.’ On the first occasion when Mao went to this man's

shop he spoke to Tu, whom he found there, hoping, as ever, to win him to better ways. The opium smoker listened with interest, and, strange to say, the truth, at that time rejected by the person for whom it was intended, found an entrance into his host's dark heart.

Once a professional gambler, travelling all over the province in quest of unlawful gains, this man had settled down in 1884 to his present occupation in the city. The reason for this change was that owing to the bombardment of Foochow by the French, under Admiral Courbet, living in inns had become expensive, and finding himself short of money when on one of his gambling expeditions, he had returned to Chuanchow, disgusted by these profitless wanderings. As he afterwards said, "God shut me out of my old life, that He might open the door for me into a new one!"

A second interview deepened the impression made on Chang Yin; some days later he was further helped by an address, which he heard his new friend delivering to some people by the roadside, not far from where he lived. The part of that address which lodged itself in his memory was about the heart.

"People's hearts are different," said the preacher, "excepting only in this, that by

nature they all are bad. Some men are proud and cruel, they have the tiger's heart; some are greedy and lustful, theirs is the pig's heart; some are crafty and full of deceit, they have the heart of the serpent."

Chang Yin listened up to this point, and then he hurried away home.

Mao, who did not know how deeply interested in the gospel the dough-nut maker had become, went one day to his shop and gave him a bit of paper, on which was written:

"Thou God seest me,
Thou art always with me."

"Stick this up on your wall," said he, and away he went. Chang Yin stuck the paper on the wall and forgot all about it.

Next morning, when he awoke and sat up in bed, there, upon the wall of the shop, opposite to him, was the paper, with its inscription, "Thou God seest me." He slowly read the words. The characters drew his eyes as he drank his morning tea. He continued to look at them over the edge of his cup as it tilted higher. The thoughts they brought came back and back, as he twisted his dough-nuts and soused them in boiling oil. God saw him, God was always with him, and the consciousness of this never left his mind, until he gave himself to

the service of his Heavenly Father. After a great struggle he abandoned his opium, became a member of the church, and is now a preacher at Stone Street, the place where Mao delivered his last sermon.

The first of Tu's companions had been won to Christ, and a new mesh woven in the widening net of influences which was to envelop his life and draw him home to God. The comfort which this success brought with it came none too soon.

Mao's faith had been tried almost beyond endurance by his brother's heartless indifference. He had prayed for him in public until the Christians, weary of his petitions, practically told him to cease.

One evening, at the prayer meeting, "His heart was fierce within him, almost to the point of breaking with God, and the words burst from his lips, 'O God, if Thou wilt not save my younger brother, I cannot work for Thee at Yingnei, or any other place.' Then, as if fearing he had said too much, he added hurriedly that he would do God's bidding, whatever that might be."

But although, as on this occasion, he might falter in spirit for a moment, he never desisted from his efforts for the wanderer's reclamation. Once, when seeking for him, he went to the shoe shop where the scapegrace was employed,



PREACHER CHANG YIN

only to find that his bench was empty. Tu's master, one of the most experienced Christians in the city, seeing how weary he was of tramping the streets, said to him:

"You will never save A Tu in this way; leave him to his own courses, and no one will blame you."

"So long as we two are left alive in the world, I will do my best to win my brother," came the answer, then with a flash of emotion, "If he were dead, he would be beyond my reach, but while he lives I will never give him up."

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE WINNING OF TU

“Wine of love’s joy, I see thy cup
Red to the trembling brim
With life outpoured, once lifted up,
I drink remembering Him.”

ORDAINED an elder of the Church in 1889, Mao was able to help the native minister in his oversight of the daughter churches of Yingnei and Eastfield Bridge. He gave himself more devotedly than ever to God’s work. To his fellow-Christians the sight of the earnest face bending over the sacred page, or the slight body bowed in prayer, became increasingly familiar. Every day they saw him speaking to the heathen, his soul burning in his face, his eyes kindling with desire for the good of men.

Tu’s delinquencies were all the more difficult to bear, because of the discredit which they brought upon his ministry. But “He who builds His bow of promise in the clouds” only gave this trial, that He might prepare the way for greater blessing in the future.

Tu gambled less than of old, though drink still tempted him. On Sundays he would lie in bed and sleep, instead of rambling the streets with bad companions. He promised not to play cards, but said that he must be allowed to drink some spirits.

At last, his master Ch'uan having added his persuasion to Mao's entreaties, Tu actually was seen in church one day. On his second visit, his brother burst out joyously :

"I had almost given up hoping, but we shall surely win him yet."

A successful operation performed upon Tu's leg by Dr. Grant, still further inclined the wanderer towards Christianity, but there was no real reformation of character, and soon he was roaming the streets and gambling as before. It was the great cholera year; the people "died like flies." Several of Tu's companions were carried off one after the other, and, thoughtless as he was, his idle self-sufficiency was shaken.

Mao, ever watchful to improve an opportunity, went to the city and spoke seriously to him. For the first time the great realities came home to A Tu, and a fear, before unknown, affected his mind. He thought of his careless friends, taken without warning. If swift death took him, what then?

In the June of 1889, Tu was in a gambling

den not far from his own home, when the moment of repentance came and he arose to go to his Father. He was looking on at a game of cards, when the thought of life and death rose up before him, and shame overwhelmed his heart. There and then he determined that if his brother should again ask him to worship God, he would do so. Next Sunday the inevitable invitation came, and though he refused at first, saying, "I can't go there, everyone will laugh at me," his heart told him that he must go.

When he entered the church, he hung his head in confusion and could not look at anyone. The sermon was about our Lord; he listened to it, confounded by a sense of his own unworthiness, and, as he listened, love melted the shame away.

Tu's workshop companions and his own family would not believe at first that he had changed, but before long everybody felt that he was indeed a new man.

On the Sunday in the end of 1890, when he was baptized, Mao's heart was full. The years of hope deferred were ended. He sang a new song. It was the bridal of his brother's soul—the high festival that joined him forever to the Heavenly Bridegroom. At evening prayer that Sunday, he stood on the spot where he had so often agonized and wept for

the wanderer, and gave thanks to Almighty God. One of those present¹ afterwards noted down such sentences from his prayer as he could remember.

“Enable us to see the distress of others, as we see our own; keep us from allowing them to go on in sin. Help us to make known to them the way of life. . . . Give us Thy Spirit that we may rejoice, and that our work may not be in vain. . . . Enlarge Thy Church. . . . We give Thee thanks for answered prayer. My younger brother has repented. It is like Lazarus called from the grave. Now the revilers have not a word to say. We beseech Thee to make Thy love known to him. Keep him from the evil way.”² Long afterwards, when the quondam companions in ill-doing were talking over past days together, Chang Yin said, with a tremor in his voice:

“Ah Tu, do you remember how your brother lifted us both like dirt out of the gutter?” Then, thinking no doubt of his own experience, he added quietly: “Ah! when he set himself to save a man, he pulled till that man had to come.”

An immediate result of Tu's reformation was that the aunt, whose bedding he had

¹ The Rev. John Watson.

² Thirty-sixth Annual Report of the China Mission in connexion with the Presbyterian Church of England.

pawned after one of his orgies, made good her word, and began to go to church. This was only the first of a remarkable series of answers to prayer which followed on the miracle of his conversion, and proved that the petitions of years had been denied, only that they might be the more richly answered.

Another consequence was that a silversmith named Yü, who lived in the neighbourhood of Lowfield Pond, was brought to God. In his unregenerate days, Tu, trusting to his uncle's prestige and the influence which it bestowed upon the family, had been in the habit of levying blackmail from this man, in order to supply means for his drunken bouts. One of the first things he did, after his conversion, was to go and ask Yü's forgiveness. The silversmith was so much impressed by the extraordinary change in one, formerly overbearing and unjust, that he too went to church and was baptized in 1896. In turn he brought his wife to give up heathenism, persuading her, by the present of a new dress, to go to service for the first time.

Lin T'u was another, whose family was immediately affected by the change in Tu's life. He had continued to worship God after Mao left his bench at the 'Sign of Daily Victory,' and was baptized in 1883, but had been persecuted by his relatives. His mother,

a fiery old woman, was beside herself with vexation when she discovered that he was a Christian. "She cried five days out of seven," and going to the work-room, heaped curses upon his head. So violent was she, that she even followed him into the church and beat him viciously in the presence of the congregation. She would rush out of the house when she heard the sound of family worship, and her son sometimes had to search the neighbourhood for two or three days, before he could find her hiding-place. Once she went to bed and threatened to starve herself to death there, if T'u did not forsake the barbarians' God. Superstitiously convinced that her son's perversity was due to her daughter-in-law,¹ she beat the girl and cut her forehead open with a brazier, which she threw at her head. "The print of a bad foot has fallen on the place," said she; "my son has been entangled by this 'child of evil.' Then she buried her teeth in the girl's arm.

Although he continued to pray for his mother, T'u had almost given up hoping for her conversion. Then came the memorable Sunday of Tu's baptism. Fresh hope sprang up within him, and he prayed for his vixen mother more expectantly than before. His prayers were

¹ The heathen believe that a daughter-in-law may bring bad fortune to the family into which she marries.

answered ; soon afterwards she became a worshipper, and eventually grew so keen, that she was always the first woman to arrive at church on Sunday mornings. She was greatly changed, and, although she found it hard to admit her sinfulness before God, she tried her best to understand the truth which she had once so fiercely hated.

At the close of her last illness, she said to her granddaughter :

“I am dying.”

“Where will you go to when you die?” asked the girl.

“My body will be put in the ground, but my spirit will go to be with the Saviour.”

“Are you a sinner?”

“Yes, a great sinner,” said the old woman ; the confession, so long withheld, now coming freely from her lips.

“Do you think that the Lord will receive you then?”

“Yes, He will take me to be with Himself.”

And so T‘u’s mother went to be with God.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE SECRETARY'S RELEASE

“ And lo, as they entered, they were transfigured, and they had raiment put on, that shone like gold. There was also that met them with Harps and Crowns, and gave them to them, the Harps to praise withal and the Crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my Dream that all the Bells in the City rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.”—JOHN BUNYAN.

ONE of the more remarkable, among the many remarkable answers to Mao's prayers, was the conversion of his uncle. The old man, who had been genuinely impressed by his nephew's teaching and example, was further influenced on being brought into personal contact with Dr. Grant, when treated at the hospital for asthma. A little later he acted as Chinese secretary to the Mission in Chuanchow, when he fell beneath the charm of the doctor's remarkable personality, and became still more favourably disposed towards Christianity.

In 1888 he was engaged as classical tutor in the Theological College of the English Presbyterian Mission at Amoy, where he formed a close friendship with the house-

master, Mr. Lin. This did much to remove from his mind any lingering prejudices against the truth. Shortly before his nephew's surrender, he happened to say to this friend: "You ought to ask God to bring Tu to repentance, for if He does so, it will be a sign that many are about to be blessed." When, not long afterwards, the news came of his nephew's altered life, it practically decided Chih-ch'iao to give himself to God.

At the close of the session of 1890, he was laid up in Chuanchow by inflammation of the lungs; his heart, already weak, began to fail, and dropsy supervened.

To one of the missionaries¹ who went to see him on the 1st of March, he said that he had a great desire to be baptized, and explained that he had intended to seek admission to the church before his illness came on, but now he feared it might be too late to do so.

"I know that baptism does not save the soul," said he, "but I would like to be baptized in order to show my love of the Lord Jesus. It is Christ that saves; I look to Him alone, and trust Him as my Saviour."

He was not versed in theology, but he had a sense of sin; and a simple faith in God had taken the place of the old spirit of enmity.

¹ The Rev. Henry Thompson.

That evening the minister and elders of the church went to administer the holy sacrament of baptism in his sick-chamber. It was an impressive scene. The quiet room, dimly visible beneath the rays of an oil-lamp; the dying scholar, with his white moustache and worn features, a bright look as of the dawn upon the almost transparent face. The little group of Christians gathered closer. The old man, dignified even in his weakness and great humility, raised himself in the bed. The water was sprinkled, the sacred rite was performed, and this soul, new-born into the kingdom, was commended to the infinite compassion of God.

On March 10th, a little more than a week after his baptism, he passed quietly away, his last words being:

“I suffer much, but I shall soon be home, and then there will be no more pain.”

CHAPTER XXXV

‘ OLD MOUNTAIN ’

“ I think for to touche also
The world which neweth everie daie,
So as I can, so as I maie.”—GOWER.

ANOTHER relative, whom Mao was largely instrumental in turning to serve the living God, was Uncle Shan. A devout heathen, he had spent a large part of his income in propitiating the idols, to whom he prayed for these three things: that the people might have food, that they might have warmth and shelter, and that they might have peace. Naturally inclined to good, when he became a Christian in 1891, he brought many others into the church by his personal influence. The method which he used was simple and effective. Singling out two of his acquaintances, he would pray for them, speak to them, and give them no rest until they were either safe inside the fold, or had definitely turned away from his entreaties.

On one occasion Old Mountain, for so his name may be translated, was much concerned

by the defection of some people in whom he had been interested. Whilst his heart was bitter within him, he had it all out one night at the South Street prayer meeting, electrifying some members of the company by saying: “O Lord, You let the idols get the better of You that time.” Then he went over conversations which had taken place between himself and the lost recruits, praying with the simplicity of a child. “We are shamed, O God,” he added, “and Thou art shamed also.”

Uncle Shan lived by himself in a tumble-down house in Out of Sight Lane, a narrow turning off Gold and Silver Street. He would sit in his bamboo chair at a little table, his New Testament open before him, a box and a broken bedstead completing the furniture of the room, passing many an hour in fellowship with God. The minister, having missed him from his accustomed place in church one Sunday, was about to go and call upon him, when a message came that he was dead.

The old man was reading in his chair by the rickety table, when the call came. That morning the neighbours had seen him shopping as usual. Later in the day, however, some children noticed him through the open doorway of his house, sitting very still, his body

leaning slightly to one side. The head was sunk upon the left shoulder, whilst the right hand hung loosely downwards, the Bible, which had fallen from its limp fingers, lying upon the floor below.

The children, who loved their kindly old neighbour, called out, "Uncle Shan! Uncle Shan!" but got no answer. The stillness frightened them, so they ran off to tell their fathers and mothers that something was wrong. When their elders went to see, they found that Uncle Shan was dead. The chapter begun on earth had been finished in heaven, though neither the children nor their parents could understand what had happened. So, one by one, those for whom Mao had prayed and laboured were garnered, "orient and immortal wheat, that never had been sown nor ever would be harvested" by mortal hand.

CHAPTER XXXVI

AN UNEXPECTED ENGAGEMENT

"In the life of Love, we die to self, but it is the death not of annihilation but of transmigration."—CAIRD.

MAO's care for his brother did not slacken when the change, which made a new man of Tu, was brought about. The first thing was to take him out of his old surroundings, so as to break the associations which bound him to the past. It was arranged therefore that he should give up shoemaking and become beadle of the South Street Church, where he would have plenty of occupation to keep him out of mischief.

He was wonderfully changed, discharging his new duties with efficiency and winning special approval from the parents of the school children, by his careful attention to the younger boarders. Now that he was provided with employment in the midst of helpful surroundings, the next step was to seek a Christian wife, who would help him in his home life. Mao had not the means to arrange a marriage, but he had prayed Tu out of disgrace, now he must pray him into the possession of a happy home.

In the meantime, as the little flock increased at Yingnei, fresh demands were made upon the preacher's sympathy ; for his personal concerns, complicated as they were, never seem to have prevented him from devoting himself to the interests of the individual Christians, committed to his care.

Shu's family were much in his thoughts at this time. The mother, opposed to Christianity, paid no attention at first to its teaching ; but her daughter, Little Tortoise, or Kuei-ah, to give the name in Chinese, drank in the gospel with delight. The girl soon learnt to read the hymns and other books, but, partly on account of her mother's opposition, and partly because she feared the ridicule of the neighbours, she dared not go to church. When at length she did summon up courage to make the attempt, the want of proper clothing was a great difficulty. On the Saturday night, before attending divine service for the first time, she washed her one presentable dress, and had to put it on before it was dry on Sunday morning. When worship was over, Mao took her home, since she dared not face her mother alone. Fortunately, however, things improved soon after this, for the old woman yielded to the entreaties of her son and daughter and became a Christian.

Shu's ill-health was a sad misfortune, making him a burden to the family instead of its chief

bread-winner. Another blow fell when the man to whom Kuei-ah had been betrothed died, and his relatives, people of the Wang surname, insisted that she should be pledged to his younger brother. The girl's mother, now a Christian, was anxious that she should not marry into a heathen home. If this was to be avoided, however, a sum of 103 dollars, advanced as part of the bride-price, must be repaid to the dead man's family, and she had no means of raising so large a sum.

Mao, who, as we have seen, made his people's troubles his own, did his best to discover some Christian family desirous of finding a daughter-in-law. He failed to do so, but, just when it seemed that the girl must be abandoned to her fate, help came in an unexpected manner.

One day, in 1892, he happened to mention Kuei-ah's circumstances to some preachers, gathered for conference in the city. One of them, a Mr. Wei, now minister in a village to the west of Chuanchow, was much interested and said :

"Since you have failed to arrange a match elsewhere, why not engage the girl to your youngest brother and have her married into your own family?"

"We can't afford it; I have but ten dollars in my possession," said Mao, looking upon the proposal as quite impracticable.

"But perhaps we can help you," said Mr. Wei.

“Suppose, for instance, that you were to spend as little as possible during the next two years, you might then save $2\frac{1}{2}$ dollars a month; your brother Pai-ch'ien might save 1 dollar, and Tu another $2\frac{1}{2}$ dollars a month. In this way you would have over 70 dollars at the end of a year. Two years' savings at this rate, with your 10 dollars and whatever money your brothers may have in hand, would make up more than the necessary amount.

Mao looked at his companion without a word. His heart went up to God. “Was anything too hard for the Lord?”

But the Wangs, determined to marry the girl into their family, pressed matters, offering to increase the bride-price to 200 dollars, and it was evident that unless a certain sum of money were raised at once, Kuei-ah would pass into their hands. So Mr. Wei, having talked things over with his fellow-preachers and some of the members of the South Street Church, twenty of them advanced a sum of three dollars each, which, with Mao's ten dollars, made seventy dollars to be paid as a first instalment of the money to be repaid.

On his return to Yingnei, Mao had a characteristic interview with Kuei-ah's mother.

“Go slowly,” said he, torn between the two-fold responsibilities of preacher and elder brother, “think the matter over before you decide. The

girl's interests ought to be considered first of all."

"The girl will do well enough, I dare say," said her mother.

"She is very young and 'Tu is thirty-six."

"That's but a small matter; my husband was old when he married me. God may give your brother length of years."

"He has been very dissolute."

"Never mind, he is your brother."

"But he may fall away again."

"You will pray for him."

"He earns only four dollars a month."

"God will provide for him and for my daughter."

V

THE LAST LAP

CHAPTER XXXVII

LOST

“There was a Door to which I found no Key :
There was a Veil past which I could not see :
Some little Talk awhile of Me and Thee
There seem'd and then no more of Thee and Me.”

OMAR KHAYYAM.

THE ministry at Yingnei, which had been carried on under circumstances widely different from those in the home lands, was nearing its close. A visitor gives us a passing glimpse of the place where, despite a hundred difficulties, the work had been cradled.

“Our church there is a dark, tumble-down old house, such as an English farmer would scorn to put his cows in ; but, by God's blessing on the devoted labours of Brother Mao, a good congregation has been gathered.” There had been disappointments as well as successes in the work, sad failures of individual lives, and fierce outbursts of persecution such as followed the conversion of Widow Ch'u, a woman who lived in a village near the church. The people taunted her and threatened to crush her ankles, so as to prevent her from walking to service ; once when

she was telling them about the death of our Lord, they retorted savagely:

“Good, your Saviour was crucified, we shall crucify you too, and then you will be like Him.”

It having been arranged that she should go to the women's school in Chuanchow city, along with another woman whom she had helped to bring to Christ, the feeling in the village became so strong, that when Mao next entered its streets the people prevented him from preaching by calling out:

“Son of a dog,
Son of a sow,
Old bachelor Mao
Abductor of women.”

When the tumult died down enough for his voice to be heard, he said:

“What you say is not true, but thank you for the warning. Perhaps I might one day have stumbled into the fault for which you wrongly blame me, but now I will be more careful not to do so.”

A great storm arose over Widow Ch'u and Mao had to leave Yingnei for a time, his place being taken by Black Cannon, whose clan was so powerful in the district, that, though the angry villagers threatened to tear out his eyes, they dared not lay a finger upon his person.

Perhaps a greater trial than this temporary

outburst was the defection of a man named Li, who had cost Mao many prayers.

A confirmed opium smoker at eighteen, this individual had gambled away his property, sold his wife, and reduced himself to penury by the time he was twenty-six years of age. He took to thieving, was caught housebreaking and terribly beaten. To crown his other misdeeds, he secretly tried to sell the ancestral fields of the family, and would have been put to death in consequence, had not one of the relatives refused to share the responsibility of taking his life. After narrowly escaping the punishment of having his eyes gouged out, his legs were bruised by a big stone, which was dropped upon them with the intention of breaking the bones.

Li was now a physical wreck, and in such miserable circumstances that he had only a torn coat to cover him, when he lay down at night to sleep upon the ground. No one could meet him, however, without being struck by his appearance. The broad forehead and full brown eyes with their restless hunted look, united with the high cheek-bones and short incurved nose to give an uncommon appearance to the man; whilst the jaw, clear and strong, was in strange variance with a drooping mouth. His shoulders were broad, his limbs spare and sinewy, and the hands and feet as small as a woman's.

Mao first found him in one of the opium dens

of the village and took a special interest in the poor fellow. Li, who to begin with could scarce keep his fingers from his benefactor's goods, was so far won by kindness, that for a time he gave up thieving as well as gambling and opium smoking, supporting himself by cutting brushwood in the mountains. He often stayed at the 'worship hall' with his friend, who gave him shelter, and many a time shared a meal with him, though he had scarce enough for his own requirements. Mao taught him to read the Bible and to pray, and, not content with such ministrations, used to search him out and take him to service on Sundays. The poor fellow, whose moral fibre had been sapped by self-indulgence, fell back repeatedly into his old ways.

His friend, refusing to give him up, cheered him on to fresh effort. At last, however, the worn-out nature failed to respond to any appeal, and after a bad relapse Li declined further help. Meeting him one day upon the street, his patient helper laid a hand upon his shoulder and said very sadly, "It's no use." This is the one instance on record of Mao losing hope of anyone, and, as such, made a great impression on his contemporaries, for to this day, twenty years after, among the heathen people of Yingnei the words "It's no use, as Brother Mao said," are current as a proverb, used when the limit of

useful effort to save a man seems to have been reached.

But though compelled to admit his failure, the faithful shepherd did not cease to pray for the poor thief. When leaving Yingnei for the last time, his eyes overflowed with tears as he parted with Li, and he said : " You are like the lost sheep in the parable before it was found, and I hate the weakness in myself which has hindered me from bringing you to the fold."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE RANSOMED OPIUM DEVIL

"The stalks of corn perish
While the grain continues for ever and ever."

MOU TSU. Translated by Prof. H. A. GILES.

THERE were encouragements as well as disappointments in the work at Yingnei; as, for instance, in the case of Hung Hsiang, one of the most faithful of the circle of Christians which rose up to confront the heathen animosity of the place. For thirty-eight years he had been an opium smoker, and, though the son of wealthy parents, had reduced himself to poverty long before he first heard the gospel. For him a change of habits meant a death struggle, but such was the hold which the truth took upon him that, encouraged by Mao's prayers, he resolved to forsake his opium, or perish in the attempt.

The six or seven days following this decision he spent partly in the ancestral temple of the family, where he writhed in agony upon the floor, and partly lying rolled up in a bed-

quilt by the roadside, near his house. Prolonged use of the drug had so ruined his internal organs, that when, by putting compulsion upon himself, he succeeded in swallowing food, he failed to digest it, and suffered the greatest discomfort. Mao, who visited him ten times a day, often passed the night with him, and, when the terrible cravings came on, would wrestle in prayer for him until the paroxysm was past. At such times poor Hsiang was so much unnerved that his body shook, and he would willingly have died, had not his faithful helper encouraged him to fight on, until the power of the vice was broken. Thus in this instance also, by prayer, apart from the use of any drug or medicine, the repentant opium devil was rescued.

By a curious inconsistency, not infrequently met with in the world, Hsiang's relatives began to persecute him, when they found that he had given up his vice, but he stood firm, and the once disreputable debauchee became a consistent Christian. From his teacher he learnt to read and spent part of each day at the 'worship hall,' where he could find quiet to study the Bible.

A few words will serve to show how real was the change effected in this man's life, and how faithfully he continued the traditions of his master.

Some years after, he had to fight another

battle, when he gave up his share in certain fields, the crops of which were divided among the members of the family, after each participant had bowed before the tablets of the ancestors. He had secretly conformed to the practice, but, when nearly eighty years of age, after much prayer, he was enabled to surrender this, his last certain source of income, and cast himself upon the Lord for daily bread.

He remained true to the end, and, when for a space the church of Yingnei had fallen upon evil times, the frail old figure might be seen making its way daily in the direction of the 'worship hall'; a witness to the power that saves and keeps. On the last day that he was able to be out, he said to his grand-nephew's wife:

"I am going to church; do not expect me home again"; and then he moved slowly down the street, leaning heavily on his stick. When he entered the church, he went to his accustomed corner and tried to read his Bible, but his eyes were too dim to see. He put down the book and dragging himself to the other end of the empty building, he managed somehow to climb three or four steps leading to the pulpit. Then people in the school, next door, heard the thin old voice quavering out the first lines of the hymn:

“My heart indeed would sing
Because of God's high grace.”

When, later, someone entered the church, the sunlight was creeping up the wall and Hsiang was lying upon the pulpit stairs. The old man was quickly put to bed, but never regained consciousness; and so the church which he had loved became at last the gate through which he passed to higher service.

CHAPTER XXXIX

PEACEFUL RIVER

“My years crowd sail and pass away
Before me to eternity ;
How poorly freighted, Lord, are they
With acts of faith and love to Thee.”

AFTER seven years at Yingnei, Mao had once more to give up work and go into hospital. When strong enough to be in harness again, he was sent to Anki, or Peaceful River, a new station where difficulties had arisen which made his presence there indispensable. Great as the wrench was, he gave up without a murmur the hope of returning to his beloved flock, and faced with alacrity the fresh duties to which he had been set apart. As one of his friends, quoting from the Analects, afterwards said :

“He had ‘no I’ ; he looked upon himself as of no account.”

On parting from the Christians at Yingnei, he said to them :

“When I came to this place it was to preach the Cross of Christ ; it is the Cross of Christ which I wish you to preach to others. Let each

one who has received the message pass it on to someone else, who in turn shall tell it to his neighbours. In this way only can the foundation of the church be firmly laid."

To Yü, the hero of the whipping-post, he said :

"Do not be led too much by what others do and say. If in all the world there were no one else who worshipped God, you ought to worship Him."

His chief regret in leaving Yingnei was due to a sense of failure. There was "so much to do, so little done." The closing words of his narrative run as follows :

"From first to last eight years¹ at Yingnei without any great result. When I examine myself I fear that I have neither been faithful nor diligent in the discharge of duty."

The sphere in which Mao now found himself was a difficult one. The city, half girdled by sand, in a loop of the winding river beneath enchanted hills, was a small one, inhabited chiefly by petty officials, runners, unaccredited lawyers, and venal plea-writers, its business life being well-nigh strangled by the death-grip of the Yamen system.

When a station was first opened at Anki, some ill-disposed people gathered together to make a disturbance, and, if possible, to riot the

¹ Like the Hebrews, the Chinese count both the first and last years.

place. It happened, however, in the providence of God, that Mao's friend, of whom we have already heard, Mr. Yeh, from the Ts'an-nei village, went to service that Sunday. As his chair swung into the courtyard the attention of the crowd was arrested. The scholar entered the building. When worship began, he put on his spectacles and, taking a hymn-book, joined in the praise of God. The crowd, seeing one of the chief people of the district among the Christians, reconsidered their unfriendly intentions; Mr. Yeh was not a man to be trifled with; there was no riot at Anki that day.

The anti-Christian feeling of the place, however, soon expressed itself in no dubious fashion, as may be gathered from the brief record of his work, which Mao kept during his stay in the city. He writes:

"In the 3rd month the 'worship hall' was attacked with stones by the roughs of the place. A petition was entered, asking the protection of the district magistrate, who sent runners to investigate the matter, and issued a proclamation forbidding a renewal of the disturbance. The assailants then desisted from their attacks until the 14th of the 12th moon, when they made a hole in the wall of the church. On the 20th they made another hole. On the 22nd they broke in by the window; on the 29th they smashed the roof with stones, and on the 2nd of

the first month of the new year they damaged two more windows."

The people followed the preacher everywhere with insulting epithets, and a manure-bucket was dropped upon his head whilst he was passing beneath the eaves of one of the houses. In spite of his shrinking from danger, Mao kept to his post in the city, and though he crept under a table on the night when the roof and windows were broken in, he continued to preach the gospel in the city and surrounding villages every day.

Before long he was joined by Feng Hsien from Yingnei, who helped greatly in the street preaching. The organized attacks upon the church buildings ceased, but an entry of later date, in the record already referred to, shows that the spirit of opposition was not yet at an end. It reads thus: "The 17th of the 10th moon. Went with the Rev. Ch'en Hsüan-ling and Wu-fang to the latter's house at Houan. Missiles being thrown at the roof, Wu-fang opened the door, when his son hit him in the groin with a stone." The gospel prospered in spite of opposition such as this, and in course of time Wu-fang became a Christian and afterwards a deacon of the church.

Visitors to Anki observed that more than ever Mao "steeped his work in prayer. When about to go out of doors to preach or visit, he must

pray; when he returned from preaching, he must pray." Much of his time was spent in the villages, where he went from house to house with the message of the gospel, declining to eat the food, offered to him by the hospitable country folk, lest any should say that he had profited at their expense.

One evening, after a long day's work, he returned to the Anki church, famished and very weary. Some people followed him into the building, and, as in duty bound, he began to speak to them; the Word took hold upon them, and far on into the night he continued his sermon. It was nearly twelve o'clock, when one of the company, discovering that he was faint for want of food, managed to procure some vermicelli and cooked him a meal before he went to bed.

After supper his custom was to go to the dens and darkest corners of the little city, and gather in the lowest of the inhabitants to the 'worship hall.' The Rev. John Watson tells how, on one of these raids, Mao induced an opium-seller to forego a night's profits and come to hear the gospel. The man, who was about thirty years of age, was by far the most noticeable personality in the motley congregation which had come together. He sat upon a high stool with feet drawn up to his body, his keen eyes closely following all that was done, every now and

then interrupting the speaker to put some searching question. When it was remarked that God, for Christ's sake, forgave sin, he asked, with a glance as penetrating as his question: "Our fathers and mothers forgive us when we do wrong. Why should not God do the same? What need was there for a Saviour to die and make atonement?" When it was explained that God must be just, while justifying the sinner, he searched the speaker's face with incisive eyes as before, but said nothing. Towards the close of the meeting he seemed to be really impressed, when Wu-p'ao and Feng Hsien, who were helping Brother Mao, testified to the power which had saved them from opium and from other sins,

Things being fairly settled once more at Anki, it was arranged that instead of resuming work at Yingnei, Mao should act as preacher at the Chuanchow Hospital, where he would have the advantage of the doctor's care. Towards the end of 1892, on the last Sunday of his stay in the city, he bade farewell to the Christians of Anki. On the Monday his baggage was put on board a boat which was to carry him down the river, but he lingered on, as if unable to tear himself away from the place. At last, long after the boat had slipped round a bend of the swirling river, he set out for Chuanchow, a distance of forty miles, on foot, and had walked some three miles, when a sense of the

needs of the people he was leaving came upon him with such overwhelming force, that he turned round and went straight back to the city. There he spent several days in visiting everyone who had come within hail of the gospel during his stay. Upon each of them in turn, he pressed the truth most suited to his need, and to each he said, "Good-bye, we shall see each other no more on earth ; I hope we shall meet again in heaven."

CHAPTER XL

THE HOSPITAL

“May I reach
That purest heaven,—be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony !—

.
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense !
So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world.”

GEORGE ELIOT.

FRIENDS who noticed from little things that Mao's strength was failing, besought him to take more care of his health, but when remonstrated with, he would say quietly, “Our lives are fixed for us by God.” At the same time he was careful to follow the doctor's advice, and, except when the claims of others prevented his doing so, took plenty of nourishing food to keep up his strength.

When, on account of heart weakness, Dr. Grant forbade him to preach, he obeyed the injunction ; but still found a way in which to help on the work he loved. His plan was to accompany a preacher, or one of the better

instructed Christians, and beckon the passers-by to come and listen to the gospel; whilst his companion preached to them, he would pray silently that the power of the Holy Ghost might accompany the message spoken.

Under the doctor's care he did good work in the hospital at Chuanchow city, where a constant flow of patients from a wide area of country gave an admirable opportunity for spreading the truth. His knowledge of the difficulties which confuse the heathen mind, made him specially helpful to the large congregations which passed from the chapel to the consulting-room, and when a patient opposed himself to his message, he would see him in private and speak kindly to him, explaining and illustrating until he had attained a clearer idea of Christianity. The sick people appreciated Brother Mao's labours highly, because he went freely among them, not shrinking from their diseased bodies and loathsome sores. Often he might be seen, seated upon a bamboo stool, book on knee, teaching a group of interested listeners, his large full head thrown forward, the dark eyes searching the faces of the audience, as if to penetrate the mystery of need behind their varying expressions. He would cross his feet and grasp the soft-bound Chinese volume until it rolled together in his hand, whilst he emphasized the message with

eloquent outstretched finger. The people, a strangely assorted group, some with bandaged legs and eyes, some pale and emaciated, would listen eagerly to his words. The narrow-shouldered, all but overbalanced figure of the speaker, the outward seeming of the audience, would fade into the background—it was a soul speaking to souls; a soul burning with love and longing; a soul through which the Christ was striving with the powers of evil in darkened lives.

Incidents like the following, which took place in May, 1894, during an address upon the difference between Confucianism and Christianity, were of daily occurrence.

“Confucius taught men,” said Mao; “our Lord Jesus saves them. Is there not a very great difference in their work?”

“Great indeed,” ejaculated a woman from among the audience. “To save men is indeed a work of the profoundest merit.”

Among the young people connected with the church during the time of Mao’s stay at the hospital, was a lad named Kin-fuk, or Golden-happiness. His mother had already brought her husband to know the Lord, and was anxious that her son should become a Christian. She often travelled through the district in the service of the lady missionaries, and wherever she went had special

petitions put up in behalf of this boy, by preachers and other friends. These prayers produced little apparent result, for Kin-fuk describes himself as having been given at the time to every kind of wickedness. He was compelled to go to church by his parents, where he endured the service with ill grace, hurrying down the aisle and out of the door as soon as the final Amen was uttered.

Mao tried repeatedly to make him stay for the catechumens' class, which met after service on Sundays; but he always refused, and kept out of the preacher's way as much as possible, diving down side streets if he happened to see him coming along the road.

When about sixteen, he had fever and went to the hospital for medicine. Mao, who was in the act of preaching at the moment that the boy entered the door, beckoned someone to take his place, and, leaving the chapel, took Kin-fuk into one of the waiting-rooms.

"Why don't you stay, when I ask you to wait for the communicants' class on Sundays?" he asked, with a smile.

"I don't wish to stay; one surely may be saved without being baptized," said the lad.

"Yes indeed," said Mao, with another smile; "the Bible tells of one who was taken to paradise without being baptized. Do you know who it was?"

"The penitent thief," said the boy.

"Well answered. The thief had had no opportunity of being baptized. You, who have the chance, surely ought to obey our Lord's command and confess Him before men."

That night Kin-fuk had a relapse, which kept him in bed for a month. One day his mother came into the room, and said something which forcibly recalled to the lad's mind the interview with Brother Mao in the waiting-room at the hospital. He thought of how the good man had tried to help him; "Nobody else will ever speak to me as he did," he said to himself.

After several relapses, Kin-fuk recovered from the fever, and, acting on his friend's advice, became so changed that he seemed to be a new lad. In course of time he entered the church, and afterwards, when acting as a lay worker, was used to gather in a congregation of over fifty souls, in one of the villages outside the South gate of Chuanchow city.

CHAPTER XLI

ANSWERED PRAYER

“My soul, presenting continually its object before God, that God’s will might be accomplished and God’s glory might be manifested in it, has been like a lamp that burns without ceasing.”—MADAME GUYON.

TU’s marriage, so unexpectedly arranged at the preachers’ meeting in the city two years before, was now an accomplished fact, the bride-price having been saved dollar by dollar and the entire amount paid over. At what cost this had been accomplished, only those who have tried to live as Mao did, on two and a half dollars a month, can imagine. More than one of his friends, indeed, believe that the privations to which he subjected himself at this time, shortened his life. He had won his brother by the prayer and ceaseless effort of years, by sacrifice and love. But more than any word or practical following up of prayer, the unconscious influence of a selfless life had, by the grace of God, achieved Tu’s restoration.

Some two months after the wedding, the re-

formed scapegrace nearly ruined everything, by getting drunk and quarrelling with his brother, Pai-ch'ien. Next day, deeply ashamed of what had happened, he wrote a confession upon a slip of paper, in which he stated that he had given way to drink, offended his brother and the minister, and that he meant to go abroad. This paper he handed to Mr. Ch'en Tsüan-ling. Then he went home, and taking his copy of the wedding certificate, handed it to his bride, saying that he must go abroad, for he had "no face" to stay longer in Chuanchow city. On hearing this bad news, the poor young thing broke down and wept bitterly.

At this awkward moment Ch'en Mei, then preacher at Wu T'ou, being in the city, happened to call at Lowfield Pond with the intention of congratulating Tu upon his marriage. The trouble which had just arisen was no sooner explained to him, than he set to work to comfort his friends, and, seeing the bride unable to restrain her tears, said :

"Don't grieve like that ; if Tu goes abroad I will go also and take care of him."

Having exhausted every possible argument in a vain attempt to dissuade the half-distracted bridegroom from his purpose, Mei went back to the church to pass the night with Brother Mao. They talked together until late, and then, being unable to sleep, they went into the 'preaching

hall ¹ to pray. The moon shone in brightly as they knelt together upon the tiled floor, beseeching God to alter Tu's purpose and save him from ruining his home. The hours passed and still they knelt in prayer, until the moonlight faded into dawn, when they had to separate.

As early as possible Mei went off to have another interview with Tu, in the hope that he might even yet be turned from his rash intention.

Tu met his first words, before they were fairly out of his mouth, by saying :

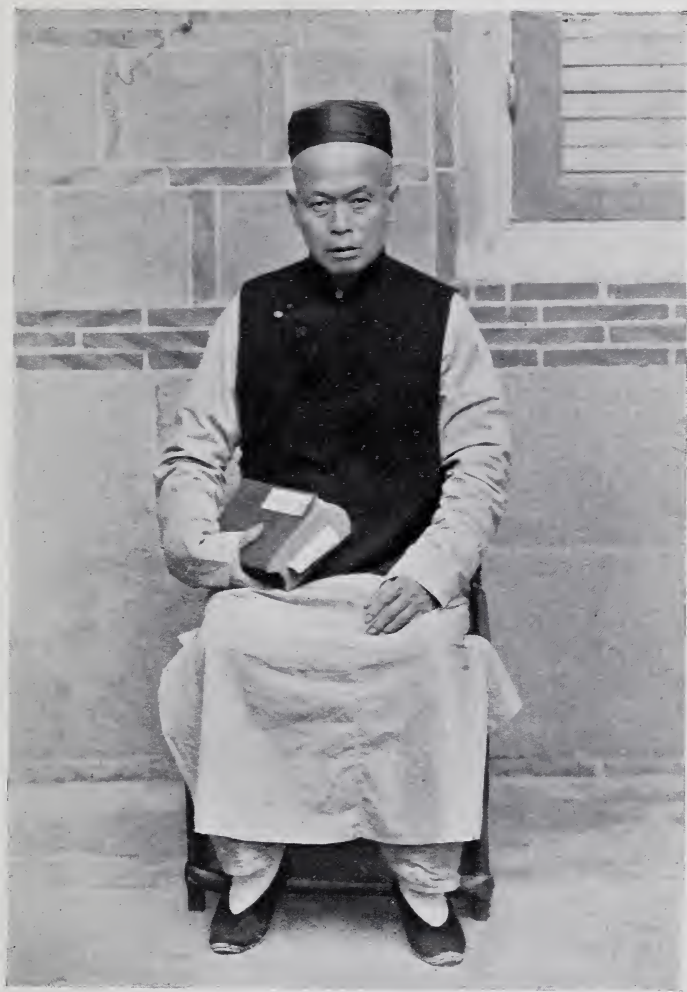
"I shall not go abroad now, my mind is entirely changed since last night."

"Your mind is changed?"

"Yes, and I am willing to apologize for my fault. I will stay at home and try to do better."

Glad at heart, Mei hurried back to his friend and knelt with him once more, to thank God for this answer to their prayers. Weeping had endured for a night, joy came to them in the morning.

¹ A hall opening on to the main street in front of the South Street Church, used for preaching to the heathen.



MAO'S YOUNGER BROTHER, CHENG TU

CHAPTER XLII

FROM GLORY TO GLORY

“The topmost crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon that shining tableland
To which our God Himself is shield and sun.”

MAO's return to the city had again brought him into close contact with the South Street Christians. As of old, he slept next to the school quarters, near the church, going to and from the hospital during the day. The boys noticed that he rose before dawn, and, after prayer and study, took his Bible with him into the kitchen, where he laid it beside the tile-built range and read as he cooked his breakfast.

One day a beggar strayed into the school and asked for food. The boys gave him nothing and bade him begone. Mao, who happened to have seen what had passed, beckoned to the man as he turned reluctantly in the doorway, and, diving into his pocket, gave him some cash. When the beggar left the school, the boys noticed the preacher

standing for a moment as if lost in thought. Then, with a stride, he was out into the sunshine, following the slowly retreating beggar. In a minute or two he returned with the man and, taking him to the church door next the school, stood talking to him under the shadow of the wall. Presently one or two of the boys, whose desks were near the entrance, dodged their master's eye and went to see what was happening. They were greatly amused when they found that Mao was not trying to recover his money from the man, as some of them had foolishly supposed, but was preaching to him. Some of the passers by laughed as they went past, saying :

“The ‘elder born’ is preaching to a beggar.”

The boys could not understand such doings at the time, but, later in life, one of them at least laid the lessons of the incident to heart, and tried to follow the great Seeker of the lost, of whom he had caught a glimpse in His servant that day.

Mao's presence was a stimulating tonic as well to the elder Christians, as to their children in the school.

One Thursday night, in the congregational prayer meeting, a member of the church prayed with some unction and at consider-

able length. At the close of the service Mao said to him:

"Do you wish to receive all the blessings for which you have just asked?"

"Yes, of course," was the reply.

"I was much interested by your prayer; you will be rich indeed if your requests are granted."

"Yes," replied the man, in a hesitating, doubtful manner.

"You don't seem to be so keen about them now as you were when you offered your prayer," pursued the gentle, searching voice. "Are you really sure that you desire to have what you asked for?"

"Indeed I am."

"No doubt you can remember some of the things for which you have just prayed."

The man made an attempt to repeat the list, but stuck after naming two or three items.

"If you will listen I shall tell you some of them," said Mao, and, calling upon his powerful memory, he repeated petition after petition to his astonished friend.

"Ah, brother," he exclaimed, "you cannot be altogether earnest in your prayers, when you forget so quickly what you have asked for. How can you expect to receive petitions

which you cannot even remember half an hour after they were offered?"

Before long Mao succeeded in stirring up a band of thirty or forty Christians to work in the city. Some of the number were told off each week to visit patients in the hospital and the sick in their homes, as well as any members of the congregation who might have been absent from church on Sunday, but their chief work was to preach the gospel to the heathen.

"Chuanchow has seven gates," said Mao; "if we take a gate each week, we shall surround the city once in seven weeks. If only we go out to preach in this way, the walls of sin in this place will fall as surely as did the walls of Jericho."

The duties of the eldership, by calling him to attend meetings of Presbytery,—the court under which the affairs of the congregations of the district were administered,—gave him a wider interest in the affairs of the church. Just before one of these meetings he met a friend, who told him that he would be unable to attend it.

"If your brother were ill, or if one of your relations were dead, would you say, 'I cannot go home'?" asked Brother Mao. His friend made no answer.

At Presbytery there was on one occasion a keen debate upon the opium question, which at that time was agitating the mind of the native Church. Morphia pills had been introduced as a so-called cure of the opium habit, and were working havoc among the people. Some members of the court defended their use, as an antidote which enabled the victims to give up a soul-destroying vice; some, with greater wisdom, pointed out that the concentrated essence of opium must necessarily be more harmful than the ordinary product. There was considerable difference of opinion on the matter, and it was doubtful how the vote would go.

After listening in silence to the discussion, Mao at last arose, and, striking to the deeper issues of the question, said: "Opium smoking is a sin. Medicine has its uses, but I have never yet heard of any medicine for the cure of sin. Only the gospel of the grace of God cures sin."

The effect of these words upon the debate, coming as they did from one who had probably cured more cases of the drug habit than any other person present, was instantaneous.

Mao's personality told upon the heathen outside the church, as well as upon the

Christians. One of the missionaries,¹ at that time resident in the city, writes of this as follows :

“My heathen teacher knows the weakness and failures of almost all the church members here ; but I can always silence him by quoting Mao, the preacher. He knows Mao, knows him in and out, has known him all his life. He knows that his younger brother was a thief and a drunkard and that Mao prayed without ceasing for him. He knows that the brother is now a member of the church and living a consistent godly life. He knows that his elder brother, a literary man, hated the doctrine, was an opium smoker, and subjected him to sundry petty persecutions, and he knows that for him Mao ceased not to pray to the Lord. . . . In the face of these facts, so well known to himself, the heathen is silent.”

But only those who stood nearest to him, within the sacred circle of Christian fellowship, could appreciate the fulness of Brother Mao's consecrated life.

“If it were possible I would have you for my minister,” said the Rev. Ch'en Hsüan-ling to him one day.

Such a speech from the most brilliant and spiritual of the leaders of the native church, so

¹ The Rev. G. M. Wales,

overwhelmed the humble-minded preacher, that he remained silent.

"If ever I go to heaven, I shall gladly sweep the floor for you," continued the minister.

"You do not speak seriously," said Mao, with a shade of disappointment in his voice.

"I say it from the bottom of my heart," was the immediate response.

CHAPTER XLIII

HOME

"I am not eager, bold
Nor strong—all that is past :
I am ready not to do,
At last, at last.

My half-day's work is done,
And this is all my part ;
I give a patient God
My patient heart."

MAO'S last preaching expedition was to Stone Street, a large village on the north bank of the Chuanchow estuary, where he spent part of the day ; now going from house to house, now resting to speak to people, gathered by some wayside temple, or under the shade of a banyan tree. Among other places he visited an opium divan, where a crowd of thieves and rowdies treated him roughly. They pushed and jostled, they used indecent gestures, they laid hands upon him, putting him to the utmost indignity and shame.

It was the last experience of the world's enmity with which he was to meet.

After returning to the city, he talked over the day's work with his minister.

"Can I have been discourteous to these opium smokers—can I have said anything to offend them? Ought I not to go back to their village and pray their forgiveness?" he asked Mr. Ch'en.

"If you forgive them, that is enough," said the minister; "you certainly ought not to go back to the village."

In spite of his friend's assurances, however, Brother Mao was much concerned about these people, and most anxious to go and see them once more. This Christlike impulse was not to be carried into effect. He had an attack of fever that evening, the temperature rose: his last illness was upon him.

Mao was put to bed in the little room opening off the front court of the church, where he had so often ministered to others of the things of Christ. To the teacher of the school he said: "My heart is at rest. The only thing that troubles me now is that I borrowed money for Kuei-ah's wedding clothes, of which I still owe ten or twelve dollars." This matter he committed to the Lord and so put the anxiety from him. Afterwards one of the missionaries¹ wrote to enquire whether the family were in

¹ The Rev. G. M. Wales.

need of money, and hearing of this debt paid it ; thus the faith of God's servant was justified and his prayer answered.

The fever increasing, Mao sent for Tu to his bedside, and, the master passion strong as ever beneath the falling shadows, he took his brother's hand and said : "Remember that Kuei-ah and yourself are the possession which I leave behind me ; serve God." This Tu promised to do, and afterwards, when blessed with a son, he sealed the compact by calling him Ch'eng-erh, "Accomplishing the Second" ; meaning that the boy should be regarded as the descendant of his brother, the second son of the family.

When it was evident that Mao could not recover, he was put into a sedan chair and carried to the old home at Lowfield Pond. As he entered the house, he said to his sister-in-law : "Someone will go to heaven from this place to-day."

All that medical skill could devise was done for the sufferer ; but the weak heart and lowered vitality rendered human aid of no avail. He lay with his Bible open beside him upon the bed. Ill as he was, its familiar pages, covered to the edges with close writing, drew his eyes. His lips moved as if in prayer. A little later he prayed audibly with his elder brother's wife, and at the close he said to her :

"I trust that we both are bound for the heavenly kingdom and that we shall meet there by and by."

He lay in the dark room, within the narrow house which had been his earthly home. The evening light, entering by an opening overhead, showed the walls of pounded earth, the unceiled roof, the paved floor. At the foot of the bed, which filled a third of the chamber, was a door opening into the entrance hall or porch of the dwelling; another doorway in the wall opposite gave upon an inner court.

People, busied with the hundred and one kindnesses which the Chinese nature offers with undemonstrative sympathy to those in trouble, came and went about the house. The fever burnt on in the dim room. The lips which had testified to so many, sealed by the touch of God, left no witness of the glory that lit the gloom and transformed the dark river into an affluent of the sea of glass mingled with fire.

When the setting sun flushed the hills behind the city with reflected light, those waiting in the sick-room saw a change upon Mao's face and sent for his brothers. The Bible remained upon the bed beside relaxing fingers, which were never again to turn its worn leaves. On the spirit, which for years had conned its pages so earnestly, the dawn was breaking. So this life passed, not as the evening radiance flits

from the rocky sides of the Clear Spring mountain above Lowfield Pond ; nor as the sun goes down beyond the darkening city ; but as the moon, which has outwatched the shadows, meets a new morning and is absorbed in rising day.

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